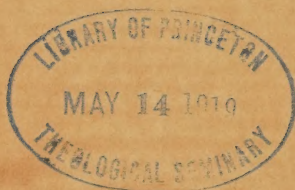


**THE
APPROACHING END
OF THE AGE**

H. GRATTAN GUINNESS, D.D.



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The approaching end of the
age viewed in the light of

THE
APPROACHING END OF THE AGE

ALSO BY
DR. H. GRATTAN GUINNESS

LIGHT FOR THE LAST DAYS

A STUDY OF
CHRONOLOGICAL PROPHECY

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THE APPROACHING END OF THE AGE

VIEWED IN THE LIGHT OF
HISTORY, PROPHECY, AND SCIENCE

BY

H. GRATTAN GUINNESS, D.D.

AUTHOR OF "LIGHT FOR THE LAST DAYS" ETC.

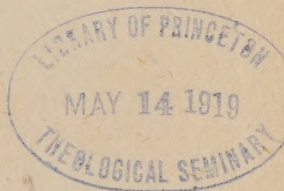
New Edition

EDITED AND REVISED BY

E. H. HORNE, M.A.

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AUTHOR OF "THE MEANING OF THE APOCALYPSE"



MORGAN & SCOTT LTD.

12, PATERNOSTER BUILDINGS
LONDON, E.C. MCMXVIII

PREFACE TO REVISED EDITION

THE *Approaching End of the Age*, published in 1878, was the author's first book on the subject of prophetic interpretation. Thirteen editions were called for, the last appearing in 1897.

In the present edition, there has been a certain amount of necessary abridgment: but nothing has been omitted which is essential to the author's argument and purpose; and there has been no re-writing by the Editor. Care has been taken not to make the author appear to anticipate, more than he actually did, events future to his own time.

The history of the Papal and Moslem Powers, and of "Protestant" Germany, has not followed the direction that might have been expected in 1878: but the conclusions of the author as to times and seasons were so well-founded, that his work retains its full value in 1918, and actually *receives new confirmation from the present world-crisis*.

The Editor would add a word of personal testimony to the importance of the work. It was the first book on the subject of prophecy to fall into his hands, 35 years ago. It has ever since had the place of honour among the many books on prophetic interpretation which have found their way to his library. But he scarcely realized how great was his indebtedness to its pages, until he read it again with the special and close attention required for its revision. The solid foundation of true principles

which the book lays down has proved of the greatest possible value to him, among the shifting sands of human opinion on the subject of Scripture Prophecy.

E. H. HORNE.

THE RECTORY,
GARSINGTON, OXON.

PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION

THE Author cannot perhaps better introduce the book to the reader, than by giving a brief outline of its history.

Imbued by education with the ordinary view, that a gradual improvement in the present state of things was to be expected, till all the world should be converted and a spiritual kingdom of God be universally established on earth, and that no return of Christ was to be looked for till the day of judgment at the end of the world,—the author no sooner began to study the Scriptures independently, than he perceived that this view obliged him to interpret in a forced and non-natural manner a variety of apparently clear and simple passages, both in the Old and New Testament. Unable to rest satisfied with doing this, he was led to read a variety of works both for and against premillennial views, especially that most able treatise ever penned *against* them, entitled “Christ’s Second Coming, will it be Premillennial?” by Dr. David Brown, of Aberdeen. Unable to reach any decision satisfactory to himself by this study of prophetic works, the author laid them all aside, and very carefully and critically read through the entire Bible, marking,

studying, and considering every passage bearing on the subject, with a view to collect the full testimony of the Word of God respecting it. This plan he would earnestly commend to those who may be in doubt as to the truth on this fundamental point. It completely set his own mind at rest, and his views have never been shaken since. That a premillennial Advent of Christ is clearly predicted in the Word of God, the writer never afterwards doubted, or hesitated to preach; but the pressing claims of incessant evangelistic labours for many years forbade his looking further into prophetic subjects.

A fuller acquaintance, acquired by personal observation, with the condition of the Greek and other professing Christian Churches of Syria, Egypt, and Turkey, and of the effects of Mohammedan rule in the East, and also with the Papal system as developed in France and Spain, and with the continental infidelity to which it has given rise, subsequently led the author to a careful study of the history of the Mohammedan and Papal Powers, and of the prophecies of Scripture believed by many to relate to them. This resulted in a deep conviction that *those Powers occupy in the Word of God as prominent a place as they have actually held in the history of the Church.*

The remarkable events of the years 1866-70, especially the outbreak of the Franco-German war, which put a stop to evangelistic efforts which the author had been for some time making in Paris, led him not only still further to consider the question of modern fulfilment of prophecy, but to prepare a work on the subject, which he intended to have published under the title of *Foretold and Fulfilled*. This work advocated the Protestant or historic system of interpreting the symbolic prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse, and in doing so had necessarily to consider the question which lies at the

base of the different views of unfulfilled prophecy taken by Christians—the *true meaning of the chronological statements contained in symbolic prophecy*, that is, whether they are *literal* or *figurative*. In studying the masterly and exhaustive treatise of Rev. T. R. Birks on this subject,¹ the author was deeply interested in the statement made on the authority of a Swiss astronomer, M. de Cheseaux, that the leading prophetic periods of Scripture are demonstrably *celestial cycles*; that is, periods *as definitely marked off as such* by celestial revolutions, as are our ordinary years or days. This led him to examine the nature of these cycles, and to investigate the connection between astronomic facts and Scripture chronology.

To one feature of the investigation he begs to call special attention. *It deals not with theories but with facts*: it consists not of *speculations* about the future, which are altogether foreign to it, but of a collection of facts, and of inferences drawn from those facts.

No employment of human intelligence is nobler than an adoring investigation of the revealed purposes of God, “which things the angels desire to look into,” while few are so puerile as a presumptuous pretence of predicting the future, apart from such cautious and careful study of Divine revelation.

There is everything in the nature of the study to make those who pursue it both practical and holy. It imbues the mind with the counsels and judgment of God about the affairs and events of earth; it reveals what *shall be*, and thereby lessens the inordinate power of that which *is now*, bringing the spirit under the influence of things unseen and eternal, and thereby weakening that of things seen and temporal. It affords

¹ *First Elements of Sacred Prophecy.*

to *hope* much needed food, lacking which it must languish and grow feeble; and to *faith* and *love* peculiar stimulus and enjoyment.

So far from the study and exposition of the prophetic Word being profitless and vain, we believe it is impossible to estimate the loss sustained by the Church, or the injury done to the world, by the very general and unjustifiable neglect of it.

For if we are right—if there is unequivocal proof in the inspired volume, of a kind which no previous generation of Christians was in a position to appreciate as we are, that the day of Christ is at hand—that the time for evangelizing the nations, and gathering in the Church of the first-born is speedily to expire—that the long day of grace to the Gentiles is all but over, and that apostate Christendom, so long spared by the goodness of God, is soon to be cut off by His righteous severity—that the mystery of God is all but finished, and His manifested rule about to be inaugurated—that the great closing Armageddon conflict is at hand, and the complete overthrow of the confederated hosts of evil—if we are right in believing that scarcely a single prophecy in the whole Bible, relating to events prior to the second Advent of Christ, remains unfulfilled—if *we are right*,—then surely every pulpit in England should be ringing with timely testimony to these truths,—surely these solemn and most momentous facts ought not, in the preaching of any of God's faithful witnesses throughout the world, to be passed by in silence. And who that has not *studied* the subject can be in a position to say that we are *not* right—that these things are not so?

May such a spirit as the Bereans had of old be granted to the Christians of this generation, that they may

diligently search the "sure word of prophecy," and draw directly from that sacred fountain *the Truth as to the fast approaching future* which God has graciously revealed ; and may this volume, through His blessing, prove in such researches helpful to not a few.

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PART I

PROGRESSIVE REVELATION



CHAPTER 1

GOD'S REVELATION OF HIMSELF TO MAN HAS BEEN A PROGRESSIVE ONE.—TRUTH IN GENERAL HAS BEEN REVEALED PROGRESSIVELY.—PROPHECY, THE DIVINE HISTORY OF THE FUTURE, CONSISTS OF A SERIES OF PROGRESSIVE REVELATIONS.—PRACTICAL RESULTS OF THE COMPREHENSION AND APPLICATION OF THIS PRINCIPLE.

GOD has been pleased to make three great revelations of Himself to man: His Works, His Word, and His Son, and these revelations have been *progressive* in character. Nature, the Law, the Gospel; a silent material universe, an inspired Book, a living God-man; these are the three great steps that have led from the death and darkness of sin to that knowledge of the true God which is eternal life.

A fourth revelation of God, fuller and more perfect than any, is yet to come. The only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, who is the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, who "declared Him" when He came the first time in grace and humiliation, will declare Him yet more fully when He comes a second time in righteousness and in glory. Then the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

Each of these revelations is *in itself progressive*. The earth and all that is therein, attained perfection by six distinct stages, during the six days of creation. We

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have only begun, even now, to understand the glory of God, manifested in the universe. To us, more than to our ancestors, the heavens declare the glory of God, and the earth showeth His handiwork; and to our children they will do so even more.

The Word of God is also a *progressive* revelation, and so has been the Providence recorded in that Word.

The Bible is composed of sixty-three separate books, written by forty various authors, during a period of 1600 years. The sacred writings develop a revelation which was continually unfolding itself through all those years; and close with a book bearing the divinely given title of "The Revelation of Jesus Christ."

The third revelation of God, that afforded by the person and work of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, was also *progressive*. The mere fact of His birth and existence, in the midst of a world of sinners, was in itself an evidence of God's love to a guilty race. Each word He spoke, each act He performed, each day He lived, unfolded more and more of God. They who saw Him saw the Father, for He was His express image; and not until He, the Maker and Judge of all, was exposed on the cursed tree, not till from His riven side flowed the water and the blood, not till He bowed His head and gave up the ghost, never till then, was the heart of God fully unveiled; "hereby *perceive* we the love of God."

And it will be the same in the future: for since finite man is destined through boundless mercy to an eternal advance in the knowledge of the infinite God, that knowledge must needs be vouchsafed in *progressive* revelations, adapted to man's ability to receive them. And herein will lie one of the joys of heaven, to be ever learning more of Him, who is the Truth, and from Him, of all things.

No student of Scripture can fail to be struck with the progressive character of its teachings. On no one subject was full information given at the beginning; all was revealed in germ only, and in the lapse of ages unfolded by degrees. Take, for instance, the doctrine of the Trinity: in the beginning God taught the unity of His nature, and the other truth that in the one God there are three persons was only intimated by certain forms of expression, as the use of a plural noun with a singular verb, which occurs several hundred times, as in Gen. i. 1, Ps. lviii. 11. There were besides expressions, the accurate harmony of which with this truth we who understand it can appreciate, but which were not revelations to those who were ignorant of it. Such, for example, is the divinely prescribed threefold form of benediction in Numbers; and such the seraphs' threefold ascription of praise in Isaiah, followed by the Lord Jehovah's question, "Who will go for *us*?" The later prophets assume the doctrine as true (Isa. xlvi. 16; Isa. ix. 6); but the New Testament alone reveals it fully.

Or take again the law of love; man's first duty towards his brother man. To the antediluvian world no law on the subject was given. To Noah, murder, the worst expression of hatred, was forbidden; through Moses the *doing* of any ill to the neighbour was prohibited, either in his person, his property, his reputation, or his domestic interests. By the Lord Jesus the *feeling* of any enmity was forbidden; and not only so but positive love, even to the laying down of life itself for the brother, commanded. What an advance is the conception of love embodied in 1 Corinthians xiii. on that derived from Sinai, or even from the Sermon on the Mount.

Our present object is to trace this progress in connec-

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tion with the prophecies of Scripture, and more especially with those of the New Testament.

I. *The prophetic teachings of Scripture consist of a series of progressive revelations.*

Its earliest predictions of any future event have the character of outlines, later ones fill in the sketch, and the final ones present the finished picture. It is first the bud, next the half-opened blossom, and lastly the flower in full bloom.

There was progress in the *amount of truth revealed*, as well as in the fullness of revelation on each point. The little streamlet of prophecy which sprang up in Eden and trickled down through the antediluvian ages, swelled by continual accessions, till it rushed a flowing Jordan through Israel's tribes, grew into a mighty Euphrates during the Babylonish captivity, and opened out into a vast delta around Patmos, whence its waters glide calmly into the ocean of eternity.

Adam heard one brief enigmatical prediction from the voice of God Himself. Noah sketched, in three inspired sentences, the great features of human history. In the curse on Canaan was contained in embryo the iniquity of the seven nations and their conquest by Joshua; the priority of blessing granted to Shem similarly contained the subsequent choice of his descendant Abraham to be the heir of the world and father of the faithful. In the promise of enlargement given to Japheth was contained the spiritual enlargement which took place when the Gentiles were received into the new covenant, and the physical enlargement accomplished in comparatively recent days by the European colonization of America, and conquest of India, both "tents of Shem." This prophecy spanned the stream of time with a few gigantic

arches; carrying us over from the vineyard of Noah to the Anglo-Saxon empires of our own day.

The patriarchs learned from God many additional particulars as to the future: to Abraham was revealed the history of the descendants of his two sons, Ishmael and Isaac; the four hundred years' affliction of his posterity; the blessing of all nations through his seed. Abraham, Jacob, and Moses, all saw Christ's day and were glad; Isaiah and Jeremiah revealed not only the judgments and deliverances of Israel, but also incarnation and atonement. The visions of Daniel present not only a comprehensive but an orderly and consecutive prophetic narrative of leading events, from his own day to the end of all things, a miniature universal history. The fall of Belshazzar; the rise of Cyrus, his conquests, the greatness of his empire; his successors, Cambyses, Smerdis, and Darius; the character, power, and conduct of Xerxes; the marvellous exploits of Alexander the Great, his sudden death, and the division of his empire; the reigns of the Ptolemies and Seleucidæ; the character and conquests of the Roman Empire; the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus; the decay and division of the Roman Empire; the rise of the Papacy and its career; its cruel persecutions of God's saints: all this and much more is foretold by the man greatly beloved.

The "burdens" of the later prophets concern Syria, Egypt, Edom, Tyre, Sidon, Moab, Philistia, Kedar, Elam, Babylon, Gog and Magog, besides Judah and Ephraim. Enoch's prophecy is comprised in one verse, and touches only one theme. Isaiah's has sixty-six chapters, and touches on an immense variety of topics. From our Lord and His Apostles flowed additional revelations, which opened up subjects previously veiled in mystery, and cast a flood of light on every important feature of

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the present and of the future. Thus the volume of prophecy grew in bulk and in scope, with the ever increasing number of individuals and of nations, and with the consequent complexity and importance of the events to be announced by inspiration.

Further, the prophecies of *any one event* have also a distinctly progressive character; they increase both in fullness and in clearness as the period of fulfilment approaches. Thus, from the fall onwards, the *triumphs of the Cross* have been the great theme of prophecy. Even in Eden the main character and grand result of human history were foretold. Enmity was to subsist between Satan and men, with all its fruits of conflict and suffering; ultimately, the serpent's head was to be bruised, the author of evil destroyed; but the victory was to be dearly bought, for the woman's seed by whom it should be gained, should have his heel bruised in the battle. Here is the Bible in embryo, the sum of all history and prophecy in a germ. But what a mysterious enigma it was, what a slight shadowy outline, what a vague though blessed prospect! It was still a light shining in a dark place, but to the eye of faith it was the one glimmer that irradiated the intense gloom of the future. But what desires it must have left unsatisfied, what questions unanswered! How long was this sore conflict to last? By what means were the vanquished to become the victors? Little could Adam and Eve know on these points; the one bright hope, like a glittering mountain top, defined their horizon; its form was rendered indistinct by the mists of ignorance; but it riveted their gaze, for the rest of that horizon was blank, and nought but travail and sorrow and labour in an accursed earth, lay between them and this hope.

To the view of Enoch, the seventh from Adam, this

single future became dual. This first prophet announced not only blessing, but judgment to come. He saw mankind divided into two classes, the saints and the ungodly (Jude 14); and he foretold a coming of the Lord with the *former* to execute judgment on the *latter*. Here was an advance: the previously revealed conflict reappears, and the previously revealed victory; but there shine out the additional truths that the conflict would not be between man and Satan alone, but between men and God, and that its termination would be effected only by a coming of the Lord Himself to earth.

To the patriarchs it was revealed that in their line should arise the promised Seed of the woman, in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed. Jacob's dying prophecy designated the very tribe in which He should appear, and threw some light on His character and work. To Moses it was made known that the promised Deliverer should be a prophet, and David foretold that He should be a king, and the manner of His kingdom (Ps. lxxii.). The promise of His Coming grew continually brighter and clearer; but as yet it appeared only *one*, a glorious Advent of a royal and triumphant Deliverer. What the bruising of the heel should be, was still hidden in obscurity: the double nature of Christ, His true character and work, His rejection, suffering and death, had not yet been predicted; they had been shadowed forth, it is true, in typical actions and ordinances; but these were not understood even by the actors in them.

In a wondrous historic prefiguration Abraham and Isaac, all unconsciously to themselves, had symbolised the great truth that the Father would give the Son to be the sacrifice; not knowing what he said, Isaac uttered the great question of all ages: "Behold the fire

and the wood; but where is the Lamb for the burnt offering?" and Abraham gave the prophetic reply: "My son, God will provide Himself a Lamb." But types like this, and like that of Joseph's rejection by his brethren, and exaltation to Egypt's throne, were not *revelations* to the then existing generations of men, although we in the light of the antitype can see them to have had a hidden meaning. Nor was the Paschal Lamb in Egypt, nor the complex system of sacrifices inaugurated by Moses, any revelation of the victim-character of Christ. David in the Psalms wrote of His sufferings as well as His glories, but so little were these passages understood, that our Lord and His apostles had to expound them even in their day.

But when David had fallen asleep, and Solomon's typical reign was over, when Israel's kingdom was on the wane, and a dark night of captivity and dispersion was approaching, then revelations multiplied. The objects and results of the first Coming of Christ were announced, in such a way as to distinguish it from His second Coming, yet not so clearly but that difficulties still left room for misconception. Many particulars and details were also added. The character of His kingdom was more fully described, and the fact revealed, that Gentiles as well as Jews, should share in its blessings. And strange new strains began to mingle in the music of the prophetic harp, as Isaiah touched its strings; mournful tones which told of suffering and rejection, of bruises and wounds to be inflicted on the coming One. He was to be a holy sinbearer, a silent sufferer, a slaughtered lamb; He was to pour out His soul unto death; He was to have a grave; He was to be a substitute, a sin offering, an intercessor; and only through experiences such as these to be "satisfied" and exalted,

“and divide the spoil with the great.” And Daniel, in full harmony, announced that Messiah should be cut off, but not for Himself, and that His Coming, instead of bringing rest and glory to Israel, would be followed by trouble, war, and desolation.

By degrees it thus became evident, that a long stretch of previously concealed valley lay between the double summit of the mighty mountain, the hope of the Coming and kingdom of Christ. The exact period when He should come and be cut off was foretold, though in symbolic style; and in the same style, a glimpse was given of the interval to elapse, before He came again to be “King over all the earth.” Vast progress had been made when Malachi, closing the volume of Old Testament prophecy, spoke of the Lord coming suddenly to His temple, and the Sun of Righteousness rising with healing in His wings. How amazingly more full and correct were the anticipations of Simeon and Anna than those of Adam and Eve! The earlier saints could only cast a wondering gaze abroad over the earth, and up and down through unknown ages; the later—knew the country, the city, the very building *in* which, and the very date *at* which, the Consolation of Israel should appear; and when at last the aged saint held in his arms the long promised woman’s Seed, he spoke of salvation, and of peace in believing, and of a sword that must pierce the heart of the Virgin Mother, proving that the mystery of the bruised heel was no dark one to his heart. But yet the consummation was not come, the serpent’s head was all unbruised, his power seemed mightier than ever. The goal receded as it was approached; the kingdom of Christ was come, but it was only in a mystery.

Once more the light of prophecy streams forth, and the interval is filled in with copious details by our Lord

and His apostles. The King is to go into a far country and to return; the mystery is revealed by the Spirit, that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs and partakers in the promises; features of the future are delineated by the pen of inspiration; but the one grand old hope, the Coming of Jesus Christ to rule, and reign, and judge, and destroy the devil and his works, still rises paramount to all the rest. Finally, in the Apocalypse, the last stretch of country is laid open to our view.

Thus again, the prophecies respecting the resurrection of the dead, and the future judgment, are few and dark in the Old Testament. Job anticipated resurrection personally, and Daniel speaks of a resurrection of part of the dead. But we have only to contrast these and similar hints, with the clear predictions of 1 Corinthians xv. and 1 Thessalonians iv., in order to be convinced of the progressive character of revelation on this subject. It is Christ who has brought life and immortality to *light* through the gospel.

Thus again, the past and future restorations of Israel, so often blended in one prophecy in the Old Testament, are broadly distinguished in the New, and the hidden mystery of the calling of the Gentiles is interposed between them. Compare, for instance, Jeremiah xxx., xxxi., with Romans xi.: "the mystery of Christ . . . in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel" (Eph. iii. 3-7). These words are an emphatic assertion of the principle of progressive revelation in prophecy.

II. *The prophecies of the New Testament have this progressive character, and divide themselves into five series of predictions, each series in the succession being in advance of the preceding one.*

There are :—

1. The prophecies announcing Christ; by the angels, by Zacharias, by Mary, by Elizabeth, by Simeon, and by John the Baptist.

2. The earlier prophecies of Christ Himself on earth.

3. The later prophecies of Christ: Matthew xxii.—xxv., Mark xiii., Luke xxi., John xiv.—xvi.

4. The prophetic teachings of the Holy Ghost through the apostles, contained in the Acts and in the Epistles.

5. The Apocalypse, or final revelation of Christ from heaven: “the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to Him, to show unto His servants the things which must shortly come to pass.”

The *first series* declared in general the character of Christ’s person and the grand objects and results of His mission; but they are silent as to all else.

The *second series*, or early prophecies of Christ Himself, in Matthew vii. and xiii., Mark iv., reveal *the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven*, its foundation and gradual development, its twofold character and its final issues. That this was an advance on all previous revelations may be gathered from the words of our Lord in Matthew xiii.: “Blessed are your ears, for they hear; for verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to hear those things which ye hear, and *have not heard them.*”

The *later prophecies of our Lord* on earth, consist almost entirely of new revelations. These embrace the rejection of the Jews on account of their unbelief, the

destruction of their city and temple, their dispersion among all nations, the treading down of Jerusalem by the Gentiles, the persecution of the Christian Church, the world-wide preaching of the gospel, and His own second Coming, with the signs and events attending it; also His own approaching sufferings and departure to the Father, and His return to receive His people to Himself, with the coming and mission of the Holy Ghost during the interval of His absence. Much as all this was in advance of the Lord's previous prophecies, He added, after making these revelations: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now; howbeit, when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth; and He will show you things to come." After all, therefore, that *had* been revealed concerning the future, very much still remained to be made known, and was to be made known by the teaching of the Holy Ghost.

Here is another distinct announcement of the principle of progressive revelation in prophecy.

With the expectations thus awakened we glance next at—

The prophetic teachings of the Holy Ghost through the Apostles. Examining the Epistles in their chronological order, we find the two earliest, those to the Church at Thessalonica, filled with the subject of the Lord's second Coming, and revealing much fresh truth in connection with it. It is to be accompanied by the transformation of living saints, the resurrection of dead saints, and their joint rapture to meet the Lord in the air; the manner of His return, and (negatively) the time of it, are announced. A description of the apostasy to be developed in the Christian Church is given, as also the history of the Man of Sin, in whose career that

apostasy was to culminate: his satanic origin, his lying wonders and deceptions, his consumption by the spirit of the Lord's mouth, and his destruction by the brightness of His Coming, are all foretold for the first time.

One or two years later, Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthian Church, in which revelations are made, fuller than any previous ones, on the subject of *resurrection*; its principles, its manner, the nature of the bodies in which the saints will rise, the instantaneous transformation of the living to be effected at the sounding of the last trumpet,—all these were newly revealed features. "Behold, I show you a *mystery*: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump."

But, more important still, the *order* of this resurrection of the saints with respect to other events is mentioned: "Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His Coming. Then cometh the end." The resurrection of saints was to be after Christ's resurrection, and before the end; but how long after the one, or how long before the other, is not here revealed.

In his Epistle to the Romans the apostle clears up the mystery of *Israel's future*, and answers the question whether God had cast off His ancient people. He reveals that their judicial rejection was but for a time; that it should end when the fullness of the Gentiles was brought in; and that then all Israel should be saved, and the Deliverer return to Zion.

Peter wrote his first Epistle about ten years later; but though he speaks of the revelation of Jesus Christ, and the appearing of the Chief Shepherd, he adds little to the sum of what was already known on these topics. But in his second Epistle, written about the year 68, he

unfolds the final doom of the heavens and the earth that are now; that they are to be burned up, the elements to melt with fervent heat and to be succeeded by a new heaven and a new earth wherein righteousness should dwell. He mentions also some particulars of the approaching apostasy, a subject on which Paul in his two letters to Timothy dwells more fully. Both apostles paint a dark picture of the "last days"; foretell scoffers, apostates, hypocrites, false teachers seduced by evil spirits to teach doctrines of devils, a form of godliness without power; and they speak also of their own near departure.

Then finally, thirty years later than the writings of the other Apostles, and closing the inspired volume commenced by Moses 1600 years before, we find *the Revelation made by Christ in glory to John*. It is the latest gift of a glorified Saviour to His suffering Church, and is entirely different in manner, scope, and style from all that precedes it. It is all but wholly devoted to prophetic truth; it contains a full and orderly prophecy of the events that were to transpire to the end of time: it unveils new scenes, and its dark sayings are full of glorious light. It is evident that the prophetic matter of this book was unrevealed previous to the death and crucifixion of Christ; for it is represented as contained in a seven-sealed book. A strong angel cries with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof?" and none is found worthy save the "*Lamb as it had been slain*," who is in the midst of the throne. *He* comes and takes the book out of the right hand of Him that sits on the throne, and *He opens* its seven seals.

The descriptions contained in this book of the sufferings of the faithful Church under persecution; of

the sins of Babylon the Great; of the judgment to be poured upon it; of the Advent of Christ and of the first resurrection; of the Millennial reign of Christ; of the universal revolt at its close; of the judgments which follow; of the New Jerusalem; of the New Heavens and the New Earth; and of the eternal state—have no parallel in the whole compass of Scripture.

Being written after the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jews, the Apocalypse omits reference to these events treated by earlier prophecies; and, being addressed to the Christian Church, it omits much found elsewhere, that is exclusively Jewish. But as regards all that was future to it, and of importance to the Church of God, it presents a consecutive series of visions, combining and connecting the separate revelations previously made, and adding much never before revealed.

III. From these facts the following inferences may be deduced.

1. *God does not reveal all the future at any one time, but gradually, as the knowledge of it may be needed and can be received.*

2. *We must not expect earlier prophecies to be equally comprehensive with later ones, nor endeavour to construct from the Gospels and Epistles alone, the perfect map of coming events. By its position as the last and fullest prophecy of the Bible, the Apocalypse is in advance of all other revelations, and a correct knowledge of the future is impossible, apart from the study of it. No difficulties, therefore, arising from its symbolic style or apparent obscurity, should lead us to dispense with its teachings. The testimony of later prophecies should never be in the slightest degree distorted, nor anything*

subtracted from their fullness, in order to bring them into harmony with earlier ones; but, on the contrary, their more comprehensive teachings must be added to all previous revelations, and then allowed to modify the impressions we have received from earlier and more elementary predictions.

3. We must therefore not reject any particular prophetic truth because it is found "only in Revelation," but receive the teachings of this final prophecy on its inspired authority *alone*, when they are unconfirmed by other Scripture.

4. The Apocalypse being written for the Church Militant, for the dispensation to which we belong, and the days in which we live, is indispensable to the man of God who would now be thoroughly furnished to all good works. No portion of it should be considered as unimportant, or treated as superfluous. "Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things that are written therein, for the time is at hand." "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the Holy City, and from the things that are written in this book" (chap. xxii. 18, 19).

5. The Apocalypse, as a precious and principal light, shining in a dark place, until the day dawn and the Day Star arise, should be allowed to cast its rich and final rays back over all the prophecies on the subjects of which it treats, in the volume which it closes; and its consecutive visions should be employed to bind together, in their proper order, the separate links of such earlier predictions.

CHAPTER II

PROGRESSIVE REVELATIONS AS TO THE RELATIVE PERIOD OF THE SECOND ADVENT OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

IN the light of the principle of Progressive Revelation, let us now consider the most interesting and momentous question in connection with the future, the *relative period* of the return of our blessed Lord and Master.

Before examining the revelations of the Apocalypse on this subject, we will briefly glance at the general testimony of Scripture with respect to it; first that of the Old Testament, and then that of the New.

It is impossible that those who "love His appearing" should be indifferent as to the *season* of their Lord's return. Even the prophets searched diligently what manner of *time* the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand, the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow. With much more reason, *we*, who in His sufferings see our salvation, and in His glory our own eternal portion, *we*, who are espoused as a chaste virgin to Christ, and have His parting promise, "I will come again and receive you to myself," may inquire diligently, and long to know, *when* we may hope to see Him as He is, and be for ever with our Lord. The more we long for an event itself, the more anxious we are to ascertain the probable period of its occurrence. It argues little love to the Lord if we

do not ardently desire His return; and it argues little desire for His return, if we never search the Scriptures, prayerfully seeking to learn from them when we may expect it. It is true we are to let patience have her perfect work; but our patience should be "the patience of hope," not the patience of careless indifference; and hope will always suggest the inquiry, how long?

It is true that ever since apostolic days it has been the bounden duty of the Church to be ever watchful for the return of God's Son from heaven. The teaching of Christ Himself and of His Apostles led the early generations of Christians, in a very real sense, to expect the speedy return of their Lord. They took His promise "Lo, I come quickly," to mean *quickly* according to human calculations; we have learned by experience that it meant *quickly*, counting a thousand years as one day; and unless we have something more explicit than this by which to shape *our* expectations, we shall have little indeed to sustain *our* hope to-day. A promise which has already extended over 1800 years might well extend over 1800 more, and the Epiphany for which we wait be still ages distant.

But Scripture contains more than general *promises* on this subject; it contains many specific, orderly, and even chronological *prophecies*. We have full and explicit inspired predictions by which to shape our expectations.

But here we are met with an objection. Those who search and study the prophetic Word are often rebuked by the quotation, "of that day and that hour knoweth no man." Now though some students of prophecy have degenerated into prophets, and have required to be reminded of these words, yet it is a mistake to suppose that they forbid investigation, or render hopeless beforehand any conclusions as to the period of our Lord's

return. The *day and the hour* of this great event have not been revealed, but its place on the general chart of human history has as certainly not been concealed.

The analogy of the Old Testament would lead us to expect that some approximation to a knowledge of the period of Christ's second Coming might, towards the close of the dispensation, be made. For however dark earlier generations of Israel may have been, as to the time of His *first* Coming, those who lived during the five centuries immediately preceding it, had the light of distinct chronological prophecy, to sustain their hopes, and guide their expectations. Though Daniel's prediction of the "Seventy Weeks" was expressed in language not understood by the generation to whom it was first given, yet as a matter of history we know that it was correctly interpreted by later generations, that it formed a national opinion as to the probable period of the appearance of Messiah the Prince, and that it taught the faithful, like Simeon and Anna, to be waiting for the consolation of Israel. Is it not likely that the later generations of the Christian Church, which is indwelt by the Spirit of truth, of whom Christ expressly said, "He shall show you things to come," should have as clear or clearer light, as to the period of the *second* Advent?—light, *not as to its day or hour, not as to its month or year*, but as to its period, and especially as to its chronological *relation* to other future events. From the fact that the Lord Jesus, as the New Testament abundantly proves, wished His disciples in all ages to be kept constant in love, and vigilant in holiness, by means of the *continual* expectation of His return, we may be sure beforehand, that the period of that event will not be clearly revealed *in plain words*, either in the Old Testament or the New. Any revelation on the subject is sure

to be characterized by a marked and *intentional obscurity*, and to be of such a character as that only "the wise shall understand" it. On the other hand, as the second Advent must either precede or follow other great future events, its position *relatively to them* must be more or less clearly indicated.

For if there exist in Scripture an orderly chronological prophecy of future events, containing a prediction of the second Coming of Christ, as one link in the chain, *its place*, in reference to all the other events, must of course be clear. And if such a prophecy contain *no* direct mention of the second Advent, yet if it contain a mention of events which from other scriptures we know to *synchronize* with that Advent (such as the resurrection of saints, or the destruction of Antichrist and his armies), the *relative* position of the Advent will still be clear.

Such prophecies exist; they are given for our study; and with the Holy Ghost as our guide we may confidently expect to learn from them with certainty the *general order* of the great incidents of the fast approaching end of the age. And not only so, but we may also expect to be able to gather from such prophecies, read in the light of the whole revelation of God, an *approximate* knowledge of the actual period of the coming of the Lord.

Let us seek then to ascertain, first from Old Testament prophecy, secondly from the more advanced teachings of the New Testament, and lastly from the final testimony of the Apocalypse, *the relative period* of our Lord's return; and, as far as it is revealed, its *actual* point in the course of the ages of human history.

The second Advent of Christ could not have been distinctly predicted in the Old Testament *as a second*; that would have involved a premature revelation of Messiah's rejection by Israel, of His death and re-ascension

into heaven, and of the present dispensation of grace to the Gentiles. Prophecies so clear as either to *procure* or *prevent* their own fulfilment, were never delivered by Divine inspiration. The two Comings of Christ, at that time both future, and having one and the same object—to redeem and restore humanity and to destroy the works of the devil—are seen *as one*, in early prophetic vision.

A Coming of Christ is, however, extensively and clearly predicted in the Old Testament, of a character essentially different from His past Coming, and accompanied by events of transcendent importance, none of which took place in connection with His first Advent. It is therefore *a future Coming*, and in relation to the first it is a *second*. He *did* come in humiliation as a gracious Saviour; He *will* come in glory as a righteous Judge and King. In other words, without the expression being used, the second Coming of Christ is foretold and described in places too numerous to mention, in the Law, in the Prophets, and in the Psalms.

The Old Testament also largely prophesies another great future event; it plainly teaches that before this world's history is wound up, before time gives place to eternity, an age is to occur which is to be earth's sabbath, man's jubilee, Christ's reign: the antitype of all sabbaths from Eden onward, the antitype of Israel's jubilees, the antitype of Solomon's glorious reign of prosperity and peace. Certain Scripture statements and analogies lead us to suppose that the duration of this period will be 1000 years; whence it is commonly called *the Millennium*.

By the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began God has announced these "times of refreshing." The Lord Jesus when on earth alluded to this period as

an object of hope to His people. "Ye who have followed me," He said on one occasion in reply to a question from Peter, "in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel"; to Nathaniel He said, "Hereafter ye shall see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man." This age is called "the dispensation of the fullness of times," in which God "will gather together in one all things in Christ" (Eph. i. 10), in which every knee shall bow to Jesus, and every tongue confess Him Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. ii. 10). It is the oft-foretold kingdom of the Son of Man; *not* God's reign over the world in providence; *not* Christ's present reign in the hearts of His people; *not* the present period at all, for Satan is at present usurping the throne of this world as king and God.

It is true that numerous passages speak of this present dispensation as in a certain sense the kingdom of God; but the expression also designates a still future period, altogether distinct from the present in its character. *This* is the kingdom of God in a mystery, *that* will be the kingdom of God in manifest power and glory.

And let it be remarked, this kingdom is no part of the eternal state which shall ensue when "the former things are passed away." It is the kingdom of the *Son*, the kingdom in which Christ as *Son of Man* is supreme; but in the eternal state the Son shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, and shall Himself be subject, that God may be all in all (1 Cor. xv. 28). Now the period during which the Son *possesses* the kingdom, and the period which *dates from His delivering it up*, cannot be the same.

Again, the dispensation in question, though blessed

and glorious beyond all that have preceded it, is yet imperfect; mankind will be still divided into nations (Zech. xiv. 16), speak divers languages (Dan. vii. 14), be distinguished as Jews and Gentiles, and as governors and governed (Ps. lxxii.); whereas in the eternal state all will be under the sole and immediate government of God.

And further, it is a period which, though characterized in the main by righteousness, life, and bliss, will yet be marred by sin, death, and judgment; men will still be mortal, and judgment will follow every transgression (Isa. lxxv.; Zech. xiv.), while in the eternal state there will be no more sin, no more death, no more curse (Rev. xxi.).

During this reign of Christ, He will have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth (Ps. lxxii. 8); but in the eternal state there will be "no more sea." In short, the former will be a kingdom characterized by the gradual and progressive subjugation of all things to Christ, in which "the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death," while the eternal state *dates from* death's destruction, and in it disobedience is unknown.

This glorious age is to *follow* the present period, and to *precede* the new heavens and the new earth, in which the tabernacle of God shall be for evermore with men.

We have therefore a great future event, and a glorious future age, clearly predicted in Scripture, and it is a deeply momentous question which of the two is to come first. Is the Divine programme of the future, first the Millennium and then the Advent, or first the Advent and then the Millennium?

It is strange that many children of God are content to leave this great question an open one, and to continue

in willing ignorance on the subject. And it is doubly strange that many who ought, as teachers of the truth, boldly to declare the whole counsel of God, should be content with views which they hold from education and from habit, rather than as the result of research, and of strong conviction that they are *the truth*, views which they would be at a loss to sustain by solid scriptural argument. They never perhaps preach on prophecy at all, but they constantly make use of forms of expression, and quote Scripture, in connections which tacitly and very effectually teach error. They thus endorse the vaguely held traditional creed, that death is the certain prospect before each individual, and that the present state of things will continue to improve gradually, until it merges into that blessed period of righteousness and peace, in which "the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea."

The views thus thoughtlessly imparted, and thoughtlessly received, are yet firmly held; for mental habits are strong. That which we have always heard and supposed to be true assumes the authority of ascertained truth in the mind, and the moment it is attacked, prejudice rises in arms to defend it. The consequence is, that notwithstanding the increase in the number of those who look for the Coming of Christ as their own individual hope, and as the next great event in the history of the Church and of the world, the majority of professing Christians still retain the opposite view, look for death personally, and expect the Coming of Christ to take place only at the end of the world. Yet that Coming is the grand motive uniformly presented in the New Testament to love, to obedience, to holiness, to spirituality of mind, to works of mercy, to watchfulness, to patience, to moderation and sobriety, to diligence,

and to all other Christian graces.¹ "That blessed hope" is essential to the production of the Christian character in its perfection. What consolation it affords in bereavement and affliction ! What holy restraint it is calculated to exercise, in prosperity and joy, and what an incentive it supplies to exertion in the Christian work and warfare !

And who is to blame that its power is so little felt by Christians in general ? How shall they hear without a teacher ? If their ministers never directly teach them the truth on this point, by expounding to them the numerous passages bearing on it in the New Testament, but leave them in ignorance or lead them indirectly into error, will the Great Shepherd of the sheep hold such under shepherds guiltless ? Earnestly would we entreat all our brethren in the ministry, to "*preach the word*" on this great subject, *to give it in their ministry, the prominence it has in their Bibles* ; to bring it in, whenever and wherever Scripture brings it in, and that is in connection with almost every topic of Christian privilege and duty.

It is vain to urge that the uncertainty of life, and the possible nearness of death, are motives as powerful as the Coming of Christ. Death can never be an object of hope to a Christian, nor a source of consolation ; God never intended it to be such ; it has lost its sting indeed to a believer, but it remains and must ever remain, a painful, humbling, repulsive prospect ; salvation itself imparts no lustre to death.

Nor is it believers only who suffer from the habitual omission of a cardinal doctrine of Scripture in the teaching they hear from the pulpit. Who shall estimate the

¹ 1 Thess. iii. 13 ; Col. iii. 4, 5 ; Titus ii. 11-13 ; 1 John ii. 28, iii. 2, 3 ; Phil. iii. 20, 21 ; Matt. xvi. 27 ; Rev. xxii. 12 ; Matt. xxv. 13 ; Luke xii. 35, xviii. 7 ; James v. 7, 8 ; 1 Pet. i. 13 ; Matt. xxiv. 46 ; 1 Pet. v. 1-4.

injustice done thereby to unbelievers? *The Coming of the Lord draweth nigh!* Why is not the fact, the (for them) *awful* fact, proclaimed aloud in their hearing, and applied with all the earnestness of love, to arouse the sleeper from his dream, to destroy the delusions of the false professor, to unmask the hypocrite to himself, to warn the wicked from his way? The Coming of the Lord draweth nigh; to them who know not God and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, that Coming must bring everlasting destruction; on them it must fall as a fiery vengeance. Should they not be faithfully forewarned of their danger?

If the preachers of the word neglect to use one of the best weapons in the armoury of truth, can they wonder that their work is not as effective as it might be? If they would fain see conversions numerous as in apostolic days, let them preach the apostolic preaching, in which not only the *past*, but the *future* Advent of Christ, had a grand and prominent place.

The two prophets of the Old Testament who furnish the most conclusive evidence on this subject are Daniel and Zechariah.

The former, a royal captive from Judæa, was a pure and faithful witness for God in the court of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, during the time of the Babylonish captivity of Israel. There is something singularly magnificent in his interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's divinely-sent dream. It starts from the time then present, and ends on the verge of eternity. Its language is intelligible, and indeed can scarcely be misunderstood. Brief and condensed in the extreme, it lights only on the salient points, the mountain tops as it were, of human history; but in so doing it must of course light

on its *most* elevated and important summit, the glorious Epiphany of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. *Whereabouts* in the chain does it place that summit? This is the point on which we now seek its testimony.

THE VISION OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR, KING OF BABYLON,
TO WHOM GOD HAD GIVEN UNIVERSAL DOMINION.

1. Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image.
2. His head was of fine gold ;
3. His breast and his arms of silver ;
4. His belly and his thighs of brass ;
5. His legs of iron, and his feet part of iron and part of clay.
6. A stone was cut out without hands ;
7. *It smote the image on his feet ;*
8. It brake in pieces the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold ;
9. It became a great mountain ;
10. *It filled the whole earth.*

THE INTERPRETATION

1. Thou art this head of gold ;
2. After thee shall arise another kingdom ;
3. And a third kingdom of brass ;
4. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron ;
5. That kingdom shall be divided ;
6. In the days of these kings,
7. *The God of heaven shall set up a kingdom ;*
8. It shall never be destroyed,
9. It shall consume all these kingdoms,
10. *It shall stand for ever.*

The dream is certain and the interpretation thereof is sure.

A succession of four empires is foretold, and that they are to be followed by a fifth, the empire of the stone. The first four would be established and ruled by men, the last by "the God of heaven." The first four would be destroyed, the last would destroy them. The first four would form one great *image*; the last would become a great *mountain*, and fill the whole earth. The first four would be consumed and carried away; the last would stand for ever.

By universal consent the first four are allowed to be the Babylonian, the Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman empires; and the last the still future kingdom of the Son of Man. The scriptural and historical evidence in favour of this interpretation, is so overwhelming, and the agreement of all students and commentators, of the early Church, of the Greek and Roman Catholic Churches, and of all Protestant Churches, so complete, that the few, who have of late years ventured to call it in question, must be regarded as presumptuous guides, who would destroy the very basis of all sound interpretation of Scripture prophecy. It were superfluous to argue the point in a work like this; those who require it can easily find abundant evidence, and that of a most convincing character.¹

We take it for granted therefore that this vision presents us with a brief historic outline of these four great empires. It presents the last of the four in two successive stages, first as legs of iron, secondly as ten toes composed of a mixture of iron and clay; representing under these emblems, first the Roman empire in its undivided imperial strength, and secondly the same empire in its divided condition.

During this last stage of the last empire occurs a

¹ See Birks, *Elements of Prophecy*.

supernatural and tremendous revolution. All the previous changes had followed each other in the ordinary and natural course; the kingdoms were in some senses a continuation of each other, for the great image is one. But now a kingdom that is no part of the image, that owns a supernatural origin, smites the image, grinds it to powder, takes its place, blots it out of existence, and fills the whole earth. This fall of the stone, cut out without hands, must symbolise something immensely more important and fundamental than any political change the world has ever seen. Tremendous critical revolutions, such as the overthrow of Babylon by Cyrus, and of Persia's power by Alexander the Great, have in this prophecy been portrayed simply by the quiet change from one metal to another, in the parts of an unbroken image. What then is the great event symbolized by the *falling of the stone*, which puts an end to the image altogether, and precedes the establishment on earth of the kingdom of the God of Heaven?

Is it, as some assert, the first Advent of Christ, to establish Christianity? Impossible! for the stone falls *on the feet* of the image. The first Advent took place in the time of the undivided imperial iron strength of the Roman empire, not after its decay and division into many kingdoms. Christianity had already been established for centuries, as the religion of the Roman empire, before the state of things symbolized by the ten toes of iron and clay arose.

Besides, the destruction of the image is attributed to the *fall* of the stone, *not* to its gradual expansion into a great mountain which fills the whole earth. Now Christianity did not destroy all earthly monarchy, at the time of its advent, or in its earlier ages. On the contrary! Its founder suffered under Pontius Pilate the

Roman governor, and His apostles were martyred by Nero and Domitian. Nothing whatever answering to the crushing, destructive fall of the stone took place at that time. The development of the stone into a mountain does not *begin* till the image *has been* "broken to pieces together, and become like the chaff of the summer threshing-floor." Now the gradual growth of Christianity has been taking place while the image still stands, and cannot therefore be the thing intended by this striking symbol. Besides this, the spiritual kingdom of God now established in the hearts of men is in no respect similar to the great universal earthly empires which form the first four of this series. It is not of the world; it employs not the sword of conquest; it does not embrace as its subjects all within a certain territory; it is invisible, spiritual, heavenly. The empire of the stone is a fifth, analogous to the other four, though of supernatural origin, wider extent, and longer duration; it is the universal empire of earth, ruled directly by the God of Heaven.

What then must be the transcendent event symbolized by the *falling* from above, with destructive force, on the feet of the image (or final form of earthly monarchy), of a stone cut out without hands? What can it be but the second Coming of Christ with all His saints, to execute judgment on the ungodly, and to reign in righteousness and glory?

The symbol employed, a stone cut out without hands, is a most appropriate emblem of Christ and His Church; that Church which, as other Scriptures show, is to be associated with Him in the work of judgment. Our Lord applies this emblem to Himself, in a way that seems almost an allusion to this prophecy: "whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken, but on whomso-

ever it shall fall it will grind him to powder." Peter applies it to the saints, "ye also as living stones." And Paul speaks of believers under the same figure as "builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." For more than 1800 years this mystic stone has been in process of cutting out. When "the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed," the separation will be complete, and the stone will *fall* on the feet of the image; that is, the Lord will come "with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all." Earthly polities will then crumble for ever into dust; "the Lord shall be king over all the earth," and alone exalted in that day.

Here then we have the first distinct answer to our inquiry, as to the relative position of the second Advent.

On the authority of this prophecy alone we may boldly assert, that it is destined to occur at the close of the present divided state of the Roman Empire, and prior to the establishment of the Millennial Reign of Christ.

We turn now to the second great prophecy of Daniel in the seventh chapter of his book. The following are the leading points of the vision and of the interpretation respectively.

DANIEL'S VISION OF THE FOUR GREAT BEASTS

1. Four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another.

2. The first like a lion, another like a bear, another like a leopard.

3. A fourth beast, dreadful, and terrible, and strong exceedingly.

4. It was diverse from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.

5. There came up among them another little horn.

6. In this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things.

7. The same horn made war with the saints and prevailed against them.

8. *Until the Ancient of Days came*, and

9. Judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and

10. The time came that the saints possessed the *Kingdom*.

THE INTERPRETATION

1. These great beasts, which are four, are four kingdoms.

2. The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth.

3. The ten horns are ten kings (or kingdoms) that shall arise.

4. Another shall arise after them, diverse from the first (ten).

5. And he shall speak great words against the Most High.

6. He shall wear out the saints of the Most High;

7. They shall be given into his hand, until a time, and times, and the dividing of time.

8. *But the judgment shall sit*, and they shall take away his dominion.

9. The kingdom shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High;

10. Whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom.

Nebuchadnezzar beheld the former vision, and Daniel

interpreted; now the prophet beholds, and an angel interprets.

The subject is in both visions in the main the same; but the second has many additional features. The four great empires of earth appear under strangely contrasted symbols, to the king and to the prophet.

In the former case a worldly idolater looked up, and beheld a great fourfold image of earthly dominion; it was terrible, yet attractive to him in its brilliancy. In the latter case a man of God looked down, and beheld four great beasts, terrible only in their fierce brutality.

Power is a dazzling object of ambition; dominion has a fascinating attraction for men; but the humblest saint of God can afford to look down on earthly glory, as from a lofty elevation, in the calm consciousness of undeniable and immeasurable superiority. Four great beasts: that was all the earth produced to the eye of the holy Daniel!

That the four empires symbolized in this vision are the *same* four previously symbolized in the image can hardly be questioned. "The number is the same, four in each. The starting point is the same, for each was given while Babylon was the ruling power. The issue is the same, for both are immediately followed by the visible kingdom of Christ. The order is the same, for the kingdoms in the first vision, as all admit, are *successive*; and in the other there are no less than seven or eight clauses which denote a *succession* in time. There is the same gradation, for the noblest metal and the noblest animal take the lead in each series. Further, the kingdoms in each vision are described as occupying the whole space, till the dominion of the saints of God. . . . The first empire is that of BABYLON, for to the king of BABYLON it was said, 'thou art this head of

gold.' If we require the names of the two next kingdoms, the angel Gabriel continues the message of the prophet: 'The ram having two horns are the kings of MEDIA and PERSIA . . . the rough goat is the king of GRECIA.' If we ask the name and character of the fourth empire, the evangelist supplies the answer, 'there went out a decree from CÆSAR AUGUSTUS that all the world should be taxed'; 'if we let Him alone, all men will believe on Him, and the ROMANS will come and take away both our place and nation.' Four supreme and ruling kingdoms, and four only, are announced *by name* in the word of God, from the time of Daniel to the close of the sacred canon."¹

The main difference is that the latter prophecy presents a more detailed view of the fourth empire. The image showed that it had two distinct stages: one iron, unmixed and undivided; the other iron and clay mixed, the metallic parts divided. In this fourth beast we discern a new element, *the dominion of the Little Horn*; and we thereby learn the moral reason for the judgment, which, in both visions alike, falls on the fourth empire in its last stage. In connection with this last vision, the Coming of Christ to judge is expressed in a clearer form; and the share which His people shall have in His reign. But the evidence it affords, as to the *relative period* of the second Advent, is in unison with that of the earlier vision. It places it at the end of the last phase of the fourth empire, and determines its *immediate* object to be the execution of judgment, and its *ultimate* object, the establishment on earth of the everlasting kingdom of the Most High, in which dominion shall be given to the saints. It thus announces that the Coming of Christ will be *prior* to His reign

¹ Birks, *First Two Visions of Daniel*, p. 20,

over the earth, in company with His saints; and it furnishes more accurate data also as to the actual period of the second Advent. This latter, however, cannot be adduced in the present stage of our inquiry, since it is connected with two points of disputed interpretation, the consideration of which must be adjourned to the second part of this work.

For the same reason the evidence of Daniel's last visions must here be presented but very imperfectly, and without any attempt to enter into detail.

We observe merely that the very comprehensive (and consequently complicated) prophecy of the "things noted in the Scripture of truth" (Dan. xi.) announces one unbroken series of wars, revolutions, persecutions, apostasies, disasters, and desolations, as occupying the whole scene of vision, until Daniel's people should be delivered, and many of the dead arise (Dan. xii. 1-3). Now these two events, the deliverance of Israel from their great tribulation, and the resurrection of the just, are associated in the prophecies with the personal Coming of Christ (Zech. xiv. 5; 1 Thess. iv.; 1 Cor. xv.). Therefore, though Daniel does not mention a second Advent of Christ, for reasons before alluded to, yet he marks its place in this series, by the position assigned to the events which synchronize with it. Thus a third time he places it at the close of the four great empires, or of the Times of the Gentiles, at the close of Israel's dispersion and tribulation, and prior to the commencement of that kingdom, in which "they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever,"—*at the close of the fourth empire and before the Millennial Reign.*

The reign of Christ on earth is distinctly predicted in

Zechariah xiv. 9, and many of its peculiar features are mentioned in verses which follow. This is an orderly and detailed prophecy, of the events that shall usher in that reign; and we have a definite statement, that foremost among those events, "*the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee: . . . and the Lord shall be king over all the earth; in that day there shall be one Lord, and His name one.*" In other words, we have in this prophecy a clear declaration that the Advent will *precede* the Millennial Reign.

Again it is written "when the Lord shall build up Zion He shall appear in His glory." The building up of Zion, that is, the restoration and conversion of Israel, must of course precede the Millennial Reign of Christ, over Israel and the earth, since it is inconceivable that Israel's dispersed and desolate condition could continue during its course. A glorious Epiphany of the Son of God is to accompany, according to this prophecy, the building up of Zion,—a premillennial event. The second Advent of Christ therefore takes place *before* the Millennium.

The history of Israel is a typical history, prefiguring alike in its broad outline and in its minor features the history of the Church. What is the general outline of that history? Is it a gradual and steady progress from bad to good, and from good to better, culminating at last in something very good and glorious? Nay, but the very reverse! It is a downward progress, a succession of backslidings and apostasies, from the days of Solomon to the Babylonish captivity, and from the restoration to the fall of Jerusalem under Titus, and the final judgment and dispersion of the ancient people of God. Now there would be no analogy, but a most marked and marvellous contrast between the type and the antitype, if the history of the Church were to be a

gradual *rise* from the state of things we now have, into a Millennial condition of blessedness, purity, and peace. It would do violence not only to the analogy which exists between these two dispensations, but to the general moral analogy of *all* God's dispensations. Without exception hitherto *every* dispensation has ended in apostasy and judgment. Eden ended thus; the antediluvian world ended thus; the theocracy of Israel ended thus; the kingdom of Israel ended thus; the ministry of the prophets ended thus; the ministry of Christ in person ended thus; the ministry of the Spirit by the Apostles ended thus, in the full and final rejection of Israel and in the giving of the kingdom of God to the Gentiles. *So far* the Gentile Church has pursued a precisely similar course, and trodden the downward road of apostasy; and can it be believed, that the last stage of her course is to afford a total contrast to all previous analogies, and culminate in a Millennium of moral perfection and physical glory? No! "when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" that is the question.

When we turn to the pages of the New Testament the conclusions to which these ancient prophecies have led us are in the fullest way confirmed.

There are in the New Testament, apart from the Apocalypse, about a hundred passages, in which the second Coming of Christ is more or less fully presented. About half of these afford no clear information on the subject we are considering, though indirect premillennial arguments might be drawn from most of them. About twenty passages teach with various degrees of explicitness, that the Coming of Christ will precede "the times of the restitution of all things"; and there are four or five, which at first sight appear to favour an opposite

view, but which on closer examination are found to harmonize with the rest. We will briefly review the leading passages of these two latter classes.

The most cursory survey of them as a whole, however, suggests two strong *prima facie* arguments in favour of the premillennial view. It is a remarkable fact, that while in these Scriptures *the return of the Lord Jesus* is everywhere prominent, the truth of the Millennium to come is scarcely asserted. It is assumed as an acknowledged hope in one or two places, and alluded to in a few others; it is implied in some of our Lord's parables, but nowhere distinctly predicted, nowhere prescribed or presented as an object of hope. What is the natural inference? That no Millennium is to occur? No! but that something else is to occur before it; and that the intervening event is the one, which the Holy Ghost would keep before the eye of the Church, that intervening event being the glorious Epiphany of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

For, supposing for a moment that a thousand years of righteousness and rest, purity and peace, *were* designed in the counsels of God, to succeed this age of sin and strife and suffering, *before* the return of the Lord Jesus, how incredible that so little should be said about it! Supposing it were to occur on the other hand *after* that return, and consequent upon it, how perfectly natural, that in prophecies designed to comfort and guide the Church during the interval of Christ's absence, it should be scarcely mentioned. Its character has been described in the Old Testament, and was well understood by Jewish Christians and by the early Church. They expected its commencement indeed, in connection with Christ's first Coming: "wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" and would never have

entertained the thought that it could occur during His absence. The events that should transpire during that absence, and the return that should introduce the kingdom, were therefore naturally the great subject-matter of the prophecies of Christ and His apostles; the subsequent Millennial Reign, taken as it were for granted, occupied a very subordinate place.

In Matthew xxiv. Christ describes His second personal Advent and the great events which shall precede it. He reveals the course of this evil age, and its close. He foretells wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, persecutions, false prophets, iniquities, apostasies, the preaching of the gospel "as a witness" to all nations, false signs and wonders, desolations, woes, including the great tribulation, and then He adds, "*Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken; and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory,* and He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

That these words describe His personal Advent in glory is certain, and equally certain is it, that this comprehensive prophecy contains no allusion to a Millennium of blessedness and peace. Can this be reconciled with the view that our Lord expected that golden age previous to His Coming? The same thing may be said of the series of prophetic parables in Matthew xiii. They certainly describe His second personal Advent, and as certainly portray the leading

features of the age which shall end with that event; but they speak of no Millennium. They describe exactly what we see around us, exactly what we know has characterized the past eighteen hundred years, a partial spread of truth, a vast upgrowth of apostasy and corruption in the professing Church, a gathering out of the great sea of humanity a mingled mass of good and bad; but no subjugation of the entire world to Christ, no signs of righteousness from shore to shore. If any one asserts that the parable of the leaven foretells a universality of godliness in this dispensation, let him reflect, that in order to give his assertion any value he must first *prove* that the "leaven" means good and not evil (a disputed point),¹ and secondly, that the "three measures of meal" means the entire human race, and not a definite part of it: *neither of which things can be proved*. This is a parable without an inspired interpretation; men can do no more than surmise its meaning; such surmises should *accord*, not *clash*, with clearer revelations, and with the Lord's own interpretation of the parable of the tares and wheat.

The same thing may be said of all the prophetic passages in the epistles of Paul: take, for example, that in the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians. He first describes the second Coming of Christ with His mighty angels in flaming fire, to be glorified in His saints, and to take vengeance on the wicked. He then foretells *the* great antecedent to that coming. What is it? A Millennium of righteousness? No! a mystery of iniquity, the rise of the *son of perdition*, the manifestation of the *Man of Sin*, the fearful reign of Antichrist. Had *he* expected a long day of Millennial light before

¹ Indeed, it may be remarked that in every other place in Scripture where "leaven" is spoken of, it clearly signifies *evil*.

Christ's return, how could he have foretold nothing, but a long night of spiritual darkness?

To Peter, Paul, Jude, and John, the future of this dispensation was overshadowed with portentous gloom. They gaze with sorrowing hearts into its dark depths; they warn the Church of approaching apostasy, and nerve it to meet coming persecution, encouraging it to hope for relief, from both, *only* at the Coming of the Lord (2 Thess. i. 7). Had *they* foreseen the Christian dispensation gradually developing into universal brightness, how would the blessed prospect have chased their sorrow and lit their countenances with smiles of gladness! But no! their looks brighten only, as they turn from the present dispensation to its close, and catch a glimpse of the rising of the Sun of Righteousness, "looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." If then the apostles expected no Millennium before the second Advent of Christ, why should we?

The second argument suggested by a glance at the general tenour of these prophecies is stronger, for it is positive rather than negative. The Lord and His apostles not only do *not* foretell a Millennium of blessedness before the second Coming, but they *do* foretell a series of events which could not coexist with such a Millennium. They predict a succession of wars, famines, plagues, earthquakes, persecutions, apostasies, and corruptions, and the working of a mystery of iniquity, which culminates in the manifestation of *the Man of Sin*. Can these *coexist* with a Millennium, whose characteristics are the absence of war, universal prosperity, the triumphant reign of the saints, and the filling of the world with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea? If the *former* characteristics are to mark the course of this

dispensation, which is clearly the teaching of Scripture, *the latter cannot*; they mutually exclude each other. There can therefore be no Millennium before Christ comes.

There are a number of passages in which the duty of constant watchfulness is urged on the Church. Take that in Luke xii. as a specimen. The Master bids us be like men that wait for their lord, pronounces a blessing on such as shall be found *watching*, speaks of the uncertainty as to the time of His Coming, uses the illustration of the *thief*, and adds, "be ye therefore ready also, for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not."

Now, though it may be difficult, to watch and wait for an event, the time of whose occurrence is altogether uncertain, and may be very distant, yet it is not impossible. But it is impossible to watch and wait for an event which we *know* cannot occur during our lifetime, nor during that of our children, nor for many, many subsequent generations. The Millennium has not commenced yet; we know it is to run a long course of a thousand years. If we know it is to precede our Master's return, how can *we* be like men that wait for their Lord? The thing is impossible, and Christ never commanded an impossibility; therefore we must expect the Millennium *after* His Coming and not *before*. The early Church with one consent placed the Millennium *after the Advent*, and felt it consequently no hindrance to their obedience to the Lord's command. An interval nearly twice as long has, it is true, actually elapsed, and was of course fore-known to our Lord. But it was not *revealed*, and though a portion of it is prophetically announced, it is announced in such symbolic language as to secure its not being understood, until the understanding of it

would be no hindrance to watchfulness. The Lord Jesus knew that fifty or sixty generations of men would live and die ere He would come again; and He wished each one to pass the time of its sojourning here, under the hallowing and cheering influence of "that blessed hope." He cannot consequently have *revealed* anything, that would justify the conclusion, "my Lord delayeth His coming." The thousand years of blessedness that He did reveal in the Apocalypse, through St. John, must consequently be subsequent to His return.

The Apostle Paul twice uses the expression "we who are alive and remain unto the Coming of the Lord"; whether we regard these words simply as the natural utterance of his own feelings, or as dictated by the Holy Ghost, they bear equally strong testimony to the fact, that the Coming of Christ, and not the Millennium, is the event for which Christians should look and wait. Taken as the language of Paul merely, they show how thoroughly imbued *he* was with the expectation that the then living generation of saints, his own cotemporaries, might witness the second Advent. Clearly he expected no Millennium first, unless he also expected to live beyond the age of Methuselah! And why, after the lapse of eighteen hundred years, should we regard the Coming of the Lord as more distant from us than he did from Him? Taking these words as an inspired expression, placed by the Holy Ghost on the lips of each successive generation of Christians, they are still more conclusive. It is a Divine warrant to all, to expect what Paul expected. The sorrowing mourners around each successive sleeper in Jesus are to take up the glad strain, "*we* who are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord." The

hope was never to lie in abeyance, never to be out of date; but to be ever glowing, bright and warm, in living hearts. Therefore the Holy Ghost cannot have *revealed* a Millennium, before the second Coming of Christ; for such a revelation must render the hope of that Coming dim and distant, and comparatively powerless, for the purposes of consolation to which it is here applied.

Again the Apostle Paul (Rom. viii. 18) uses two remarkable expressions, "the sufferings of this present time" and "the glory which shall be revealed in us." They respectively apply to *this dispensation*, and to the *Millennial age*. He speaks of this present time as a period of suffering, not only to the sons of God, but to the whole creation, which is under the bondage of corruption, and subject to death. He speaks of that future age as a time of the manifestation of the sons of God, a time of "glorious liberty." He says that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together, and that we ourselves in like manner groan within ourselves, while awaiting that period. He defines *the point* at which the transition from the one state to the other will take place, the point at which the Millennium will commence, the point for which we wait. It is "*the redemption of our body*," that is *the resurrection*. But the resurrection will not come till Christ comes; we know these two events synchronize even to the twinkling of an eye. Therefore *the Millennium will not come till Christ comes*, and *Christ will come before the Millennium*. This conclusion can only be avoided by asserting, that during the Millennium, the saints and the whole creation will be groaning and travailing in pain together, and with "earnest expectation" awaiting a better state of things.

In 2 Thessalonians ii. 8, in speaking of the destruction

of the Man of Sin, the apostle declares that it will be effected by the brightness of Christ's Coming. Either therefore the Man of Sin, the great enemy of Christ, will live and reign throughout the Millennium, which is incredible, or Christ will come before the Millennium and destroy him.

Having thus reviewed some of the general teachings of Scripture, both in the Old and New Testaments, concerning the relative period of the second Advent, we now turn to the final prophecy of the Bible, in the expectation of finding there fuller and clearer light on the subject. The conclusion we have reached is abundantly confirmed by the *general tenour* of the Apocalypse, and by the *direct evidence* of its closing visions.

This book presents the Church as exposed to tribulation, and having need of patience; as bearing a painful and dangerous testimony to Christ; and as enduring temptation and persecution,—right up to the time of the Advent. Its author was in his own person, a representative of the Church in these respects. "I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." Never in the whole course of the book do we see the saints exalted and reigning, until after the second Advent. The picture of heavenly glory in chap. vii. occurs in unbroken sequence after a succession of war, famines, plagues, martyr deaths, and political convulsions. No period of holiness and peace on earth is mentioned as intervening. The seven Trumpets announce an uninterrupted series of judgments, up to the moment when it is said "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever"

(xi. 15). The trumpets clearly represent, not Millennial blessings, but providential judgment; they leave no room for a Millennium before the Coming of Christ.

But any remains of doubt ought to be dispelled by the closing visions of this book. There, bright, clear, full, and harmonious with every previous prediction, stands out on almost the last page of inspiration, a grand and detailed *description* of the *Epiphany* of Christ. It is a symbolic description, it is true, for the revelation in which it occurs is a symbolic prophecy; but its symbols, interpreted by other scriptures, can hardly be mistaken; they serve rather as the steps of a ladder, to enable the mind to mount to the majesty of the theme. And there too, immediately succeeding it, stands out a second prophecy of *the reign* of Christ and His saints, symbolic too, yet simple in its symbolism, and with even its simple symbols explained to make them simpler. As we look into these last unveilings of the counsel of God about the future, once more we ask the question, what is the prospect before us? A thousand years of bliss on earth, and then our Lord from heaven? or our Lord from heaven first, and then a thousand years of bliss? We remember as we await the reply, that it is the last testimony we can have, till the event itself give an answer, the last prophetic utterance on the subject by the Holy Ghost.

THE VISION OF THE ADVENT OF THE KING OF KINGS

And I saw heaven opened,

And behold a white horse;

He that sat on him was called Faithful and True:

In righteousness He doth judge and make war:

His eyes were as a flame of fire;

On His head were many crowns;

He had a name written that no man knew but He
Himself.

He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood:

His name was called the WORD OF GOD.

The armies which were in heaven followed Him,

Upon white horses;

Clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

Out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword,

That with it He should smite the nations;

And He shall rule them with a rod of iron.

He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and
wrath of Almighty God,

He hath on His vesture and on His thigh
a name written,

KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

Rev. xix.

Every clause of this magnificent vision determines the rider on the white horse to be Jesus Christ and none other. Heaven was opened to give Him exit; a door *in* heaven had been previously opened for John to gaze on its hidden mysteries; now heaven itself opens, and its armies follow their great Captain. He bears a four-fold name; He is called Faithful and True; who can He be but "Jesus Christ the faithful and true witness"? He has also *a name that no man knows* but He Himself; who can He be but the Son, whom "no man knoweth but the Father," the one, who of old said to Manoah, "Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is *secret*?" His name is called "the Word of God"; who can He be but He who in the beginning was with God and was God? And on His vesture and on His thigh are emblazoned the unmistakable words, "*King of kings and Lord of lords.*"

He comes to do a threefold work, each part of which belongs to Christ and to Christ alone, as other scriptures abundantly prove. "*In righteousness He doth judge and make war*" against the Beast and his armies (ver. 20). Who can He be but the Lord who shall consume that wicked son of perdition and Man of Sin, with the spirit of His mouth and the brightness of His Coming? (2 Thess. ii. 8.)

"He shall *rule the nations with a rod of iron.*" Who can He be but the only-begotten Son of God, to whom are addressed the words of the second Psalm, "ask of me and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron"?

"*He treadeth the winepress* of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." Who can He be, but the glorious One, mighty to save, who says, "I will tread down the people in mine anger," and "trample them in my fury" (Isa. lxiii.)? His vesture dipped in blood identifies Him with this red-apparelled Conqueror and solitary Saviour.

"His eyes are as a flame of fire," as were the eyes of the one like unto the Son of Man, seen by John in the first vision of this book. Who can He be but that God who is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity? that God who searches the heart and tries the reins, and from whom no secrets are hid? "*On His head were many crowns,*" for "dominion and glory and a kingdom are given Him, that all nations and languages should serve Him." Who can He be but that Son of Man who is also the Ancient of Days, Israel's long looked for Messiah, the King of Righteousness? On His head were many diadems: the royal crown, the victor's crown, the priestly crown, the nuptial crown, all

befit His blessed brow ; and on it rest the many diadems which recently adorned the bestial horns, united now on the head of Him who has vanquished them all. Who can He be but the One to whom every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess, the One who has received a name above every name ? He is followed, not by angelic hosts, but by the saintly armies of Heaven ; who can He be but the One, of whom Enoch prophesied, “ the Lord cometh, with ten thousands of His saints ” ; the One of whom Zechariah wrote, “ The Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with Thee ” ; the One who shall be glorified in His saints, and admired in all them that believe, in that day ?

And this vision can be a vision of nothing else but a *personal* Advent of Christ. It cannot be a vision of a *spiritual* Coming : every clause forbids the thought. For *such* a Coming it needs not that heaven should be opened ; for *such* a Coming it needs not attendant armies of saintly warriors. The Coming of the Lord *with ten thousands of His saints* has been regarded, even from antediluvian ages, as His personal appearance to execute judgment on the ungodly.

It cannot be a vision of a *providential* Coming ; the previous chapters of this book afford illustrations of the kind of Divine interference in the affairs of earth, which is intended by this expression. In the opening of the seven-sealed book, in the scattering of the coals of fire on the earth, in the sounding of the seven Trumpets, Christ is seen acting providentially. But He is seen *in heaven* ; thence He directs His various angelic and other agencies, for His *providence* needs not His personal *presence* on earth. “ The heavens do rule ” in providence *on behalf* of the saints, not *in conjunction* with them, whether man perceive it or not. If this

vision represent merely a providential Coming, to what end the opened heaven, and the armies following the King of kings? Nowhere is it promised or prophesied, that the saints shall share with Christ His present *providential* government; but it *is* promised that they shall share His future work of judging and ruling the world.

But further; if it were a figurative, spiritual, or providential Coming that is here represented, its character and its objects must needs be in harmony with those of all the spiritual and providential Comings with which we are acquainted. In other words, if the Coming here prefigured be an event belonging in any sense to this dispensation, it should harmonize with the known actions and operations of Christ during this dispensation. It does not do this; it is on the contrary in abrupt and violent contrast to them. The line of action here ascribed to the Lord Jesus, and the line of action which we know Him to have been pursuing ever since incarnation, are so antagonistic, as to preclude their characterizing one and the same dispensation. In the *vision*, "in righteousness *He doth judge*"; in *this age* He refuses to judge, saying, "I came not to judge"; "man, who made me a judge over you?" "I judge no man"; "neither do I condemn thee." In the *vision*, "out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should *smite the nations*"; in *this dispensation* the gospel does not smite the nations, but quickens and blesses them. In the *vision*, "*He ruleth the nations with a rod of iron*"; in *this age* Christ does not "*rule the nations*" at all, for Satan is the God of this world; but if He did, He would rule them in grace and by love, even as He rules His Church, and not by the iron rod, of inflexible righteousness. In the *vision*, "He treadeth

the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God," that is, He executes the holy indignation of God against sinners. In *this dispensation*, He manifests the love of God to a guilty world, He receives gifts even for the rebellious, He beseeches sinners to be reconciled to God. Who would ever think of describing Christ's present actions in the words of this vision? The Coming here prefigured cannot then be an event of *this age* at all, it is the inauguration of a future age.

But it is argued this vision cannot prefigure a literal personal Advent, its symbolic language proves that a figurative one only is intended. This is virtually to assert that a prophecy of the second Advent of Christ is impossible in the Apocalypse; for it is throughout a book of symbols; it is written in the language of symbols. Now seeing the second Advent is the one climax to which everything in the book tends, can we suppose, that there is in it no description of the great event itself? Impossible! *This then must be it, for there is no other.*

Moreover, the judgment scene immediately succeeding requires this vision to be a real *personal* Advent. In former parts of the Apocalypse angels had been extensively employed. But now the Lord of hosts prepares Himself for the final battle, and comes personally to inaugurate by the judgment of the living,—the destruction of the antichristian hosts,—that great day of judgment, and day of the Lord, which lasts a thousand years, and ends with the final assize of the Great White Throne.

In short, a personal Advent of Christ is the theme, the main theme, of the whole Bible. The past Advent did not accomplish the full results predicted; since *it* became *history*, a second Advent has been the dominant

note in every prophetic strain, and in the Apocalypse it becomes more prominent than ever. From the "behold He cometh with clouds" of the first chapter, to the "behold I come quickly" of the last, this theme pervades the book. The Apocalypse is a grand drama, the Epiphany is its climax. "Hold fast till I come," is Christ's own word to Smyrna; "behold I come quickly," His encouragement to Philadelphia; the redeemed in heaven rejoice in the prospect, "we shall reign on the earth." On the sounding of the seventh Trumpet, the elders fall down in worship before God, because the moment is at last come, when He is to take His great power and reign on earth. Under the sixth Vial the Lord repeats the warning note, "behold I come as a thief"; and the Apocalypse, yea the Bible itself, ends with the same promise, "surely I come quickly."

"Now the present vision is the passage, and the only passage, where such a glorious Advent of our Lord is distinctly described. Till then, He is seen in spirit as the Lamb in the heavenly places, as the Priest at the heavenly altar, as the mighty Angel, the mysterious Messenger of the covenant, while the hour of mystery still continues; and still repeats the warning, Behold, I come. Here, in the vision, heaven is open, and He is seen to come in manifest glory, as the Word of God. After this, He is spoken of as already come. In the very scene where the powers of evil have just been overthrown, and from which Satan has just been banished, His people 'reign with Christ a thousand years.' When the white throne is seen, He is seen already present, to occupy it; and not one word is given to indicate a fresh arrival of Him who sits to execute the judgment. All converges on the Advent, before this vision. All centres on a personal Advent of the Word,

in the vision itself. All implies a previous Advent, in the descriptions which follow. And hence the internal evidence, that the real Advent as here described, is complete."¹ Now this vision which presents Christ and His saints coming forth to judge and to reign is *followed* by others which present the judgment and the reign; that is, the destruction of the hosts of Antichrist, and the Millennial Reign of the risen saints with their Lord. We have therefore in the *last* prophecy on the subject the *clearest* proof that the second Coming of the Lord is to be premillennial.

Here the marriage of the Lamb, that perfect union of Christ and His people, which cannot take place prior to resurrection, immediately precedes this Advent vision. He is to come to destroy Antichrist, and to take vengeance on those that know not God and obey not the gospel. Here this destruction of Antichrist and the kings of the earth and their armies, immediately follows this Advent vision.

Suppose for a moment, that the place occupied by it were left a blank, that the prophecy passed at once, from the marriage of the Lamb, to the destruction of the antichristian host. *Other Scriptures would force us to place the second Coming of Christ between those two scenes.* The destruction of the Beast and the False Prophet demand a previous Epiphany, according to 2 Thessalonians ii.; and the rapturous marriage of the Lamb in heaven, the meeting in the air of Christ and His saints, requires a subsequent manifestation, according to 2 Thessalonians i. 10.

When therefore we find a vision, symbolizing in the most consistent and magnificent way, a personal Advent of Christ, just where we might have expected to find it,

¹ Birks, *Outlines of Unfulfilled Prophecy*, p. 83.

just where all prophecy would conspire to fix its place, just where its absence would render it impossible to harmonize multitudes of other predictions; when we find it stamped with a sublimity of symbol and circumstance worthy of *such* an event, and too grand for any other, we bow to this final testimony of the prophetic Word, and admit that Scripture leaves no room to doubt, that the Lord Jesus will come again in person, to this earth, before the Millennium; in other words, that the second Advent will be premillennial.

CHAPTER III

PROGRESSIVE REVELATIONS AS TO THE MILLENNIUM, THE RESURRECTION, AND THE JUDGMENT.

WE turn now to consider the teachings of the Apocalypse as to the events to succeed the second Advent of Christ; and it is here that the application of the principle of progressive revelation becomes of peculiar importance.

That principle requires, as we have seen, that we receive the teachings of this inspired prophecy on its authority alone, when they are unconfirmed by other Scripture; and it requires also that we be prepared to modify impressions derived from earlier and more elementary predictions, whenever this latest revelation of the future demands it. No author expects to have the latest and fullest edition of his book corrected by an earlier and less explicit one; no author but would wish on the contrary that early editions should be read in the light of the last. The Apocalypse contains undoubtedly the last and the fullest revelation of God on these subjects, the final expression of His purpose; prior statements must be conformed to this, and not this to prior statements.

The Advent vision is followed by a vision of the judgment on Antichrist and his associates, and immediately after this we have—

THE VISION OF THE MILLENNIUM

And I saw an angel come down from heaven,
 Having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great
 chain in his hand;
 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent,
 which is the Devil and Satan,
 And bound him a thousand years, and cast him into
 the bottomless pit,
 And shut him up, and set a seal upon him,
 That he should deceive the nations no more, till the
 thousand years be fulfilled,
 And after that he must be loosed for a little
 season.

And I saw thrones, and they sat on them;
 And judgment was given unto them;
 And I saw the souls of them that were
 beheaded,
 For the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God;
 Who had not worshipped the beast, nor his
 image;
 Neither had received his mark in their foreheads, or
 in their hands;
*And they lived and reigned with Christ a
 thousand years.*

But the rest of the dead lived not again,
 Until the thousand years were finished;
 This is the first resurrection.
 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first
 resurrection;
 On such the second death hath no power,
 But they shall be priests of God and of Christ,
And shall reign with Him a thousand years.

The twentieth chapter of Revelation, as is evident to every student of Scripture, contains several new predictions peculiar to itself.

The broad fact that there is to be a reign of Christ and His saints on earth is not new. Though little is said about it in the Gospels and the Epistles, for the reason previously assigned that they occupy themselves rather with the previous *Advent*, yet the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets, teem with predictions of this *reign* of Christ.

But that it should be introduced by a binding of Satan, that it should last a thousand years, these facts, dimly intimated elsewhere, are revealed here *for the first and only time*.

Are we therefore to stand in doubt about them, or try to explain the revelation in some non-natural sense? God forbid! The God who cannot lie, *inspired* this single prediction of them; is not that enough? We need not hesitate to believe what GOD says, even if He say it only once; and indeed we might reject most of the revelations of the Apocalypse, if we adopt the maxim of doubting all that is only once predicted.

Not only does this prophecy require us to believe two *new* revelations, but it also necessitates a modification of previously entertained views, on two familiar and all-important points of our creed, the *resurrection of the dead* and the *judgment to come*. It reveals, what had never previously been clearly made known, that both are to be accomplished *in two successive stages*, with a thousand years between them, and *not* in one great act, as, but for this chapter, we might have supposed.

Are we then to distort the declarations of this chapter, in order to bring them into harmony, not with previous predictions, but with the impressions we have derived

from previous predictions? No! but we must bring our impressions into harmony with the joint teaching of earlier and later revelations, which, seeing both are Divine, cannot be contradictory. No one would dream of doing otherwise, in the case of an earlier and later communication from some superior authority.

We propose therefore first to examine what the *peculiar* teachings of these visions *are*, and secondly whether these teachings, taken in their most obvious and natural sense, are *inconsistent with* other Scriptures, or merely *in advance* of them.

Let it be noted then, first, that this is not a vision of the resurrection of saints, but of their *enthronement* and *reign*. As far as they are concerned, the resurrection is past already before this scene opens.

Other Scriptures definitely fix the moment of the resurrection of saints. "They that are Christ's" rise *at His Coming*; His saints meet their Lord in the air, and come with Him to the earth (Col. iii. 3; 1 Thess. iv.). The resurrection must therefore have taken place *before* the Advent described in the previous vision. What was the immediately preceding act in this Divine drama?

Multitudinous voices in heaven are heard asserting, that Christ has assumed His kingly power, and that *the Marriage of the Lamb is come*. Now this Marriage, celebrated by the glad hallelujahs of heaven, can be nothing else than that full union of Christ and His Church, which is to take place at the resurrection. The angelic host describe the Bride, as made "ready," as arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of saints, and John is instructed to write down "blessed" those who are called to the Marriage Supper. Now not till after resurrection, can Christ present His Church to Himself "a glorious Church, not

having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but holy and without blemish," according to this scene: *resurrection must therefore have preceded this vision of the Marriage Supper*. No vision of it is given in the Apocalypse; how could there be? It is the event of less than a moment, it occupies only the twinkling of an eye. It could not be represented as an occurrence *on earth*, for the risen saints are, in a second, caught up to meet their Lord in the air; nor as an occurrence *in heaven*, for it is connected with the earth and the air. The precise locality of the nuptial feast is not indicated, a veil of privacy is thrown around the meeting of Bridegroom and Bride; it *takes place*, and this is all that we know. Whether any interval elapse between the resurrection rapture and the glorious Epiphany, is not revealed to us here. But the Epiphany *has occurred*; and the Church, under the symbol of the armies that were in heaven, has shared in the work of judging the antichristian hosts, before this Millennial vision opens. In it, consequently, we have not the resurrection, but the enthronement, of the risen saints. The expression "this is the first resurrection" is not a note of *time*, but of *character*: it is tantamount to, this is the *company* who rise in the first resurrection, *not*, this is the chronological *point* at which the first resurrection takes place; and the company here spoken of, like those called to the marriage supper, are declared *blessed and holy*.

There is similarly no vision of the second stage of the resurrection in verse 12; the dead are presented as already raised, and standing before God. But though these verses give no vision of either the first or the second stage of the resurrection, they give much new light about it; *they distinctly reveal, that there is never to take place a simultaneous resurrection of all man-*

kind, but that on the contrary, the distinction so marked in this life, between the godly and the ungodly, is to be more marked still in the resurrection. They show us that the righteous shall rise before the wicked; rise to live and reign for a thousand years with their risen royal Lord; and that the "rest of the dead" rise not again till the thousand years be fulfilled.

"And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given unto them." To whom? To Christ and His risen saints, to the King of kings, and to the armies which were in heaven; for we must go back to the 13th verse of chapter xix. for the occupants of these thrones. There intervenes no plural or collective noun, for which this pronoun *they* could stand. We may therefore paraphrase the words thus: "I saw Christ and His risen saints enthroned and governing the world." John noticed especially among the latter, the martyrs and confessors who had figured so prominently in previous stages of this long drama; their cries, and groans, and sufferings, and blood, had been main features of its different stages, and they are therefore singled out from among their brethren for a special mention, which marks the unity of this scene with the whole Apocalypse. In this final righting of the wrongs of ages, the sufferers are enthroned beside the great Sufferer, the overcomers sit with Him in His throne, the faithful witnesses of Christ, reign with their Lord, the oppressed and slaughtered saints, judge the world. But this mention of a special class is by the way: the main stream of the prophecy continues thus: "I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given unto them, and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years; but the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection."

Subsequently, "the rest of the dead" are seen standing in the last assize, before the Great White Throne, to be judged. "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God." The dead are thus divided into two portions; there are the dead who rise and reign, and the dead who rise not and reign not with them. There are the dead who rise to judge the world with Christ, and there are the dead who rise to be judged according to their works by God. There are the dead who rise to sit on thrones, and the dead who rise to stand before the Great White Throne. There are the dead who rise emphatically "blessed and holy," and the dead who rise only to be tried, condemned, and cast into hell. There are the dead who rise immortal, for on them the second death hath no power, and the dead who rise only to become its victims. Throughout, these two classes are presented in marked and intentional contrast; the latter are beyond all question literal dead, *so therefore are the former*.

This passage then teaches that the resurrection of the dead will take place in two stages, with a thousand years between. Taken in its apparent, most natural, and consistent meaning, nothing else can be made of it. Let any one who simply understands the terms used read these verses attentively, and then answer the question, "Will the dead all rise at the same time?" We will venture to assert they would unhesitatingly answer: "No! this passage declares the contrary, the righteous will rise a thousand years before the wicked."

Such is the obvious meaning of the prophecy, and the more closely it is analysed, the more clearly is it perceived to teach this doctrine. The difficulty arises from the mistaken attempt to put new wine into old bottles, to reduce the fullness of a last revelation to the dimensions of a more elementary one. Let us reverse

the process, and applying the principle of progressive revelation, let us see whether every previous prophecy on the subject of resurrection may not, without any distortion at all of the text, be harmonized with this latest prophecy.

There is but little in the Old Testament on the subject of resurrection, for it was Christ who brought life and immortality to light; but, though revealed only dimly in the olden time, they *were* revealed. We find in Daniel xii. a passage more quoted than almost any other, in support of the idea that the resurrection of the righteous and of the wicked will be at one and the same moment. "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." The time of this resurrection is fixed in the previous verse to be the time of the deliverance of Daniel's people from their great tribulation, that is, the time of Israel's restoration, Antichrist's destruction, and the second Advent.

It seems to require some ingenuity to make out a contradiction between this prophecy and that of John. It places resurrection at the same *point* in the great chart of the future; it makes the same moral distinction, and in the same order, as our Lord in John v., and it omits in the same way all allusion to a chronological interval. It neither specifies nor excludes one, as was natural in a prediction so brief and elementary, of an event at that time so distant. The apparent discrepancy is clearly caused by *defect of detail* in this early prophecy; and we have only to *add* to its statement the new particulars given in the latter revelation, to produce perfect harmony.

Some expositors, however, render the original of this verse differently from our authorized version; translating

it "the many," or "the multitude of," which is equivalent to *all*. Others consider that it will not bear this version, but rather that the two classes contrasted in the latter part of the prophecy refer to the many who rise, and to the "rest of the dead," whose resurrection is not here mentioned, but who are destined to shame and everlasting contempt.¹ Whichever view may be the true one, neither, it is evident, presents any important variation from the Apocalypse; the two predictions harmonize *as far as the first goes*. No contradiction can be alleged between them; we must not wonder that we do not find in the pages of Daniel, that which we cannot discover even in the Gospels, a doctrine that it was reserved for the final prophecy of Scripture, to reveal.

The passage of Scripture which more fully than any other dwells on the subject of *the resurrection*, the passage which has illumined the darkness of death to successive generations of Christians, is the fifteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians.

To the sound of its majestic and marvellous strains, we commit to the dust those whom we bury, in sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection. But why does an intelligent and conscientious Christian shrink from sounding over the grave of the ungodly those triumphant and heart-cheering strains?

Because that chapter treats exclusively of *the resurrection of those that are Christ's at His Coming!* There is no assertion here of a simultaneous rising of all mankind! In vain we search for any allusion at all

¹ "I do not doubt that the right translation of this verse is,—'and many from among the sleepers of the dust of the earth shall awake, these shall be unto everlasting life, but those (the rest of the sleepers who do not awake at this time) shall be unto shame and everlasting contempt.'"—Tregelles on *Daniel*, p. 102.

to a *resurrection of the wicked*. "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power!" Believers only can be included in the statement. "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed: in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised, *incorruptible*, and we shall be changed; for this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality"; that death may be swallowed up in victory, and we obtain the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ. There is nothing here at variance with the vision we have just considered; on the contrary, there are two distinct harmonies with its teachings.

1. The resurrection of those that are Christ's is spoken of as a distinct event. "Christ the firstfruits, afterward *they that are Christ's*" (not "afterward all mankind").

2. This resurrection is said to be, *not* at the end of the world, but "*at His Coming*," which, as we have seen, is 1000 years before the end of the world.

It is added "*then cometh the end*," and as well-nigh two thousand years have already intervened between *the first two* events here predicted, it is doing no violence to the passage to assert, that one thousand years will intervene (according to the twentieth chapter of Revelation), between *the last two*. The prediction marches with majestic step, measuring millenaries, as it passes from one scene of resurrection to another.

1. Christ the firstfruits.

2. Afterward, they that are Christ's, at His Coming.

3. Then cometh the end.

Three great epochs of resurrection: that of Christ, that of Christians, that of the ungodly; the latter not

being named or described here, though its chronological point is intimated, as *at the end*.¹

It is the same with the other great statement of our hope in 1 Thessalonians iv. It speaks of a resurrection of the dead in Christ, and of *such only* at His Coming; and thus *suggests*, what the Apocalypse *states*, that "the rest of dead live not again" till after an interval of whose length it says nothing.

In Acts xxiv. 15, Paul, stating his own faith and that of the Jewish nation on this point, says "there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust." The vision we are considering shows this double resurrection, and adds the information, that its chronology is as twofold as its character, that the resurrection of the just will take place a thousand years before the resurrection of the unjust. There is no contradiction here.

In Philippians iii. 11, Paul,—expressing his own ardent desire and aim,—says, "if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." Had he put before himself as an object of attainment, and of difficult attainment too, a resurrection common to all mankind, and consequently inevitable for him? No! but a *peculiar* resurrection! A resurrection "*from among*" the dead, the first resurrection, in which only the blessed and holy have part. In the same way our Lord spoke of being "recompensed at the resurrection of the just";

¹ In the typical "feasts of the Lord" (Lev. xxiii.) there were similarly THREE INGATHERINGS. The *firstfruit sheaf*, on the morrow after the paschal sabbath; seven weeks later the *firstfruits of the harvest*, "two wave loaves"; and at the *end* of the Jewish sacred year, the ingathering of all the fruits of the earth, including the *vintage*. These were the three feasts, in which all Israel's males were to appear before God. "Thrice in the year shall all thy males appear before God" (Ex. xxiii. 14-17).

could He have used such language if there were no distinction between the resurrection of the just and that of the unjust?

In John v. 28, 29, our Lord says, "the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment."

It must be admitted that if we were obliged to take the word "*hour*" here in its most limited sense, this passage would undoubtedly teach a simultaneous resurrection of all the dead. But we are not. The Greek word admits of wide extension; its primary meaning is "season"; and our Lord Himself, in a sentence immediately preceding this, employs it to cover the whole of this Gospel dispensation, in which the spiritually dead are being quickened to life by His voice. If it admit of extension to eighteen hundred years in the twenty-fifth verse, it may well include a thousand in the twenty-eighth, and this is all that is requisite, to make it agree perfectly, with the apocalyptic vision. This grand and solemn prediction of our Lord announces that *morally* there will be two resurrections, first of the just, and secondly of the unjust; the twentieth chapter of Revelation adds, that *chronologically also* there will be two, first of the just, and secondly of the unjust. There is no discord here, but there is on the contrary a marked harmony. Would our Lord have used the two striking, distinct names He does use, had He foreseen one general resurrection? Would He have spoken of "the resurrection of life" and "the resurrection of damnation"?

These are the main passages in the Bible bearing on the doctrine of resurrection. We now inquire, where does Scripture teach a simultaneous resurrection of

all mankind? And echo answers, where? Yet many have so strong an impression that it is a fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith, that they feel bound to evade, in some way, the simple conclusions to be drawn from the visions we are considering.

So far from being *at variance* with previous inspired teachings on the subject, the fresh revelations of the Apocalypse enable us to perceive the Divine accuracy of many delicate touches in earlier Scriptures, which would have remained unperceived but for our knowledge of this truth. Such, for instance, is the discriminating use of the four Greek expressions, rendered indifferently in our version "the resurrection OF the dead." Moses Stuart says: "After investigating this subject, I have doubts whether the assertion is correct that such a doctrine as that of the first resurrection is nowhere else to be found in Scripture. The laws of philology oblige me to suppose, that the Saviour and St. Paul have both alluded to such a doctrine." The Greek expressions used may be literally translated "resurrection of dead ones," "resurrection from among dead ones," "the resurrection: that one from among dead ones," and "the out-resurrection of or from the dead." The Greek expressions are not used indiscriminately; and it is evident that, had they been uniformly translated by exactly corresponding phrases, the thought of a resurrection of some of the dead, and not of all the dead, would have been a familiar one to students of Scripture. The phraseology employed on the subject is, in other words, precisely what would naturally be selected by the Holy Spirit, if resurrection were foreseen to consist of two stages; but unaccountable, if it were all to consist in one act.

It should be remembered also that a resurrection of

some, which leaves others behind, is the only kind of resurrection of which we have any example. Such were the three resurrections miraculously wrought by our Lord; such was His own resurrection, and such was the rising which took place, when "many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves, after His resurrection, and appeared unto many." Why should not that which *has* happened on a small scale happen on a large?

THE FINAL JUDGMENT

The commonly received opinion on this subject, that the whole race of man will appear simultaneously before the great white throne of God, to be judged according to their works, at the Coming of the Lord, is based upon a great many passages of Scripture, and is tenaciously held, with a conviction that any departure from it is grave heresy. But this twentieth chapter of Revelation, taken in its context and in its natural sense, requires a modification of this theory. It does not deny that the whole human family will appear before the judgment seat and throne of God; but it teaches that they will not do so *simultaneously*; that the act of judgment, like that of resurrection, will take place in two stages, divided by an interval of a thousand years.

THE VISION OF THE FINAL JUDGMENT

And I saw a Great White Throne, and Him that sat on it;

From whose face the earth and the heaven fled away,
And there was found no place for them.

And I saw *the dead*, small and great, stand before God;

And the books were opened,

And another book was opened, which is the book of life,

And the dead were judged
Out of those things which were written in the books
According to their works.

And the sea gave up the dead which were in it;
And death and Hades

Delivered up the dead which were in them;
And they were judged,

Every man according to his works.

And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire.

This is the second death,
And whosoever was not found written in the book
of life

Was cast into the lake of fire.

This passage taken in its natural sense, and with its context, is clearly a sequel to the previous vision, and can be interpreted only in connection with it.

The "rest of the dead," who *lived not again* then, *do* live again now; those that had done good, rose in the bright morning of this day of the Lord to the resurrection of life, those that have done evil rise now at its lurid close, to the resurrection of judgment.

The expression "the dead, small and great" includes all who were dead, at the inauguration of this great session of judgment: not only the "rest of the dead" left behind at the time of the first resurrection, but all cut off during the course of the Millennium, as well as the immense company of rebels, destroyed by fire from heaven, at its close.

A little reflection will convince the thoughtful of the impossibility, that the Church of the firstborn should be summoned to this bar of judgment. They have already

been tried, condemned, and executed, viz., in the person of the Surety. Rom. vi. 7, "He that has died is justified from sin (guilt)": death exhausts the penalty. Ever since the Marriage of the Lamb, a thousand years before, they have been publicly owned as the Bride of Christ. Shall they now be called to account for the long-cancelled score? Neither their presence, nor their acquittal, nor their eternal portion, are so much as alluded to in the vision. We read only of "the dead, small and great," and of their condemnation alone.

Such then is the apparent teaching of this vision, on the subject of judgment. It remains to be considered, whether the strong impression in the minds of many, that this doctrine is not only additional to, but *contrary* to, the doctrine of other parts of Scripture, is well grounded or not.

We must, then, inquire on what passages this strong conviction is based, and whether they *do* definitely teach a *simultaneous* judgment of the just and of the unjust. The point to be decided is exactly similar to that we have considered in connection with resurrection; do earlier Scriptures oblige us, by unequivocal assertion of *simultaneousness*, to give a non-natural interpretation to these final prophecies? or do they, in the light reflected back from these latest revelations, accommodate themselves naturally to a different sense?

The close connection which exists between resurrection and judgment, would lead us to expect that what has proved true in the one case, will do so in the other. The resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment, are never separated by any considerable or defined interval. If therefore the former is proved to be divided into two widely distant stages, the presumption is strong, that this will be the case also with the latter. The two

resurrections indeed receive their distinctive appellations from the results of the judgments which accompany them; the "resurrection of life," and "the resurrection of damnation."

In reviewing the testimony of other Scriptures on this subject, we are likely to find—in harmony with the principle of progressive revelation—many statements of the broad fundamental doctrine of future judgment, which fall in equally well with either view; some few which at first sight seem to teach simultaneousness, but which on closer examination will be seen to leave the point undecided; and some, which can only be fairly interpreted, or fully understood, by assuming two epochs and scenes of judgment.

Of the first class are such passages as, "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." "God will render to every man according to his deeds" (Rom. ii. 5). "The Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then shall He reward every man according to his works" (Matt. xvi. 27).

Many such passages exist; it is not needful to multiply quotations; no argument can be built on them, in favour of either view. Without further revelation we should doubtless have understood them to teach a simultaneous judgment; *with* further revelation, we can read them as broad comprehensive statements, made by One who *knew*, but did not at the time wish to *reveal*, modifying details. Such passages mention the universality of the judgment, the twofold result, the fact that it is to follow our Lord's return; and they show that in either case the issues will be eternal; but they do not touch the question of *simultaneousness*.

With the closing parable of Matthew xxv. it is otherwise. This is the leading passage of the second class above alluded to; those which seem at first sight distinctly to teach a simultaneous judgment of the righteous and the wicked. On any theory this passage is one difficult of interpretation, owing to its peculiar semi-parabolic form; the difficulty of deciding whether it is a judgment of the dead or of the living; the principle of the judgment,—*works*,—taken in connection with the eternity of the issues in either case; the limited nature of the test, on which the great award is made to depend; its relation to the previous parables; its likeness to, yet dissimilarity from, other parallel Scriptures; and other features. But the following considerations seem to make it clear, that the scene here described is not identical with that in Revelation xx. 12. *This* presents *an award* only, *that* an *investigation*, for “the books were opened and the dead were judged out of those things written in the books”; *this* presents the righteous and the wicked, and mentions the eternal portion of each; *that* is silent altogether as regards the righteous; this parable in describing those gathered before the Son of Man, makes use of an expression applicable to *the living*, “all nations” or “the Gentiles”; while the vision in the Apocalypse shows only the dead, “the dead small and great”; in the former, the wicked are condemned *en masse*, on the negative ground of what they have *not* done; in the latter, as individuals, on the positive ground of what they *have* done, “the things written in the books.”

If this parable does describe a judgment of the dead (which is most unlikely), then we are compelled by the later revelation to apply to it the same rule, as to the first class of passages, and to conceive that our Lord

presented the judgment as a great whole, and was purposely silent, as to the interval between its two stages. Other great and important events had to intervene; the moral effect to be produced on the minds of His disciples by this truth of judgment to come, was the same, whether it were to take place at once, or at intervals; and the object He had in view did not require that He should enter into details for which they were not prepared. The same Divine reticence, which had purposely hid from their view the interval between His own approaching departure and His return, hid also the interval between the stages of this judgment. In this view of the passage the first session of the judgment is at the Advent, when the righteous are rewarded with the kingdom; the whole Millennium is included under the phrase, "then shall He sit on the throne of His glory"; and the concluding session of the judgment is at its close, when the wicked are doomed to everlasting fire.

A considerable part of the impression of simultaneousness which it produces on the mind, is to be attributed to the parabolic form of this prophecy. Divested of this, and translated into a plain declaration of the future, it would seem as natural, to apply to it, as to any other passage on the subject, the principle of prophetic perspective.

Our Lord's parables in Matthew xiii. are also adduced as teaching the simultaneousness of the judgment, but the same thing is true of them. Their object is to unfold the present *mixed* state of things in the kingdom of heaven, in contrast with the *pure* state of things that shall exist after the end of this age. The division between the wheat and the tares, between the good fish and the bad, which takes place, as we are expressly told

at the end of this age, is a division effected at the Advent, among the *living*, not the dead ; it is a severing between real believers, and false professors ; between the true, and the apostate Church. The tares are still growing with the wheat in the harvest field ; "the field is the world." The fish are still struggling together in the Gospel net ; there is no thought here of a resurrection of the dead, it is a severance among the living. Other Scriptures teach us that a resurrection of dead saints will take place at the Advent, but that is not alluded to here. The tares are gathered in bundles to be burned, and the wheat is gathered into the garner. "One shall be taken and another left." "We who are alive and remain shall be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air." The parables of Matthew xiii. present the thought of severance, and not that of judicial investigation and award.

We next look at the passages which teach more directly the truth, that judgment to come will take place in two stages. Foremost among them is our Lord's own memorable declaration, John v. 24 : "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation ; but is passed from death unto life." It is well known that the word here translated condemnation means *judgment*, and is so translated in the verse but one previous. The believer shall not come into judgment, when judgment is to be to condemnation. Not, he shall not be condemned in the judgment, but he shall not even *come into it*. The same word is used in verse 27, and again in verse 29, where it is translated "damnation." Now this resurrection of damnation, or resurrection to judgment, is clearly that spoken of in Revelation xx. ; *and into that, our Lord Himself*

declares His people shall not come. There shall be a reckoning of Christ with His people, as many passages which shall be examined presently teach; but this is not judgment. Alford says: "The reckoning which ends with 'well done, good and faithful servant,' is not *judgment*; the reward is of free grace. In this sense the believers in Christ will not be judged according to their works. They are justified before God by faith and *by God*; 'God is He that justifieth—who is he that condemneth?' Their passage over from death to life *has already taken place*,—from the state of spiritual death, to that *eternal life* which they *have* already. It is to be observed that our Lord speaks in very similar terms of the unbelieving being condemned already, in chapter iii. 18. The perfect tense of the verb must not be weakened or explained away." Let those who hold that there will be a simultaneous judgment of the just and of the unjust explain this statement of our Lord. He does not say that believers shall not be *condemned* in the judgment, but that they shall not *come into it*. Can anything be clearer than this?

Into what judgment then shall they come? Into one, distinct alike in its objects, principles, results, and period, from the judgment of Revelation xx. 12.

In the judgment of sinners the object is to determine their eternal destiny; in the judgment of saints *their* eternal destiny is already determined; they are, from the moment they believe, indwelt by the Holy Ghost, one with the Lord Jesus, possessors of eternal life, and heirs of eternal glory. The resurrection which precedes their judgment has manifested this; for when Christ their life appears, they appear with Him in glory, they see Him and are like Him, conformed to the image of God's Son. Now it is clear, that when these *already*

glorified saints stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, the point to be investigated and settled is *not* whether they deserve and are to have eternal life and glory; grace has already given them these, though they deserved eternal condemnation: but the point to be investigated and decided is, how far they have been faithful servants and stewards of their absent Lord; how far their works, as saved persons, can stand the test of Christ's judgment, and what measure of reward each is to enjoy. Their common possession of eternal life does not forbid degrees in glory, and the fact that they are saved by grace does not forbid that they shall be *rewarded* according to their works. That this is a very different thing, from the eternal destiny of each individual being made to depend on his own works, is evident.

The judgment of sinners is on the ground of "rendering to every man according to his works,"—justice; the judgment of saints is on the ground of grace, for it is grace alone that rewards any of our works.

The judgment of sinners ends in the blackness of darkness for ever; the judgment of saints ends in "then shall every man have *praise* of God." The one is a judgment of *persons*, the other of *works only*. The one, as we have seen, is prefigured in symbolic vision in Revelation xx.; the other is spoken of in various places, in the Epistles addressed to the early Church. "Every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is"; that is, the searching, penetrating judgment of Christ, shall put the works of His people to the test, and only the perfectly pure shall abide the test. Some works, like wood, hay and stubble, will be destroyed by this "fire"; but, even so, the man who did them shall be saved; his

works may perish but he shall "never perish" according to his Saviour's promise. In Romans xiv. Christians are urged in view of this judgment, not to judge each other, "for we shall all stand before the *judgment-seat* of Christ," not the "throne," as in Revelation xx.

The period of the judgment of sinners before the Great White Throne, is a thousand years or more *after* the coming of the Lord. The period of the judgment of saints is fixed to be *at* the Coming of the Lord: "therefore judge nothing before the time, *until the Lord come*, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts, and then shall every man have praise of God" (1 Cor. iv. 5).

We conclude therefore that these two judgments cannot be the same, and that so far from being at variance with other inspired prophecies, the twentieth chapter of Revelation enables us to understand and combine previous statements, and sheds new light on many. Judgment will no more be simultaneous than resurrection; both will take place at two grand epochs, marking respectively the morning and evening of the Day of the Lord; the former will be a resurrection and a judgment unto life, the latter a resurrection and a judgment unto condemnation.

Whence then has arisen the exceedingly prevalent opinion to the contrary? From the littleness of the finite mind, that comprehends with difficulty the vast, far reaching, and complete designs of the Infinite; from the lack in us of the patient continuance of searching the Scriptures; from the irreverent neglect with which the last prophecy of the Bible is too often treated; and from the not giving it, even when studied, its due authority—the non-recognition of the principle of *Progressive Revelation*.

From Dean Alford's *Commentary on the New Testament* we extract, in conclusion, the following testimony to the doctrine of two distinct resurrections of the dead. "I cannot consent to distort the words [of Rev. xx.] from their plain sense and chronological place in the prophecy, on account of any considerations of difficulty, or any risk of abuses which the doctrine of the Millennium may bring with it. Those who lived next to the Apostles, and the whole Church for 300 years, understood them in the plain literal sense: and it is a strange sight in these days to see expositors who are among the first in reverence of antiquity, complacently casting aside the most cogent instance of consensus which primitive antiquity presents. As regards the text itself, no legitimate treatment of it will extort what is known as the spiritual interpretation now in fashion. If, in a passage where *two resurrections* are mentioned, where certain *souls lived* at the first, and the rest of the *dead lived* only at the end of a specified period after that first,—if in such a passage the first resurrection may be understood to mean *spiritual* rising with Christ, while the second means *literal* rising from the grave;—then there is an end of all significance in language, and Scripture is wiped out as a definite testimony to anything. If the first resurrection is spiritual, then so is the second, which I suppose none will be hardy enough to maintain: but if the second is literal, then so is the first, which in common with the whole primitive Church and many of the best modern expositors, I do maintain, and receive as an article of faith and hope."

PART II

PROGRESSIVE INTERPRETATION

CHAPTER I

HUMAN COMPREHENSION OF DIVINE PROPHECY HAS BEEN, AND WAS INTENDED TO BE, PROGRESSIVE.—THREE IMPORTANT INFERENCES FROM DANIEL XII. 9.—REASONS FOR A PARTIAL AND TEMPORARY OBSCURITY OF PROPHECY; AND MEANS BY WHICH PROGRESSIVE COMPREHENSION OF ITS SIGNIFICATION HAS BEEN GRANTED.

WE have seen that God has been pleased to reveal the future to men only by degrees; that both in the number of subjects on which the light of prophecy has been permitted to fall, and in the clearness and fullness of the light granted on each, there has been constant and steady increase, from the pale and solitary ray of Eden, to the clear widespread beams of Daniel, and to the rich glow of the Apocalypse.

We now proceed to show that human comprehension of Divine prophecy has also been by degrees; and that in certain cases it was evidently intended by God to be so. Light to understand the prophetic Word is as much a Divine gift as that Word itself. The sovereignty of God was exercised in the selection of the matters to be revealed by prophecy, the time of the revelation, and the individuals to whom, and through whom, it should be communicated. And it is equally exercised in the determination of the degree *to* which, and the time *at* which, the true meaning of certain prophecies shall be unveiled, as well as in the selection of the individuals

to whom the interpretation shall be given. "The Lord hath not only spoken by dreams and visions of old, but He speaketh also every day, even as often as He enlighteneth the minds of His servants, that they may be able to search out the hidden truth of His word, and bring it forth unto the world."¹

Prophecy, being essentially a *revelation* of the future, is of course designed to be understood; but it does not follow that it is designed to be understood immediately on its being given, nor by all who become acquainted with its announcements. The Most High has various ends to answer in predicting the future; and though we may not *always* be able to discern His reasons for making revelations before He intends them to be comprehended, yet in some cases they are sufficiently clear.

In foretelling, for instance, the first Advent of His Son, God might have been pleased to predict its *results*, in as clear and unmistakable a manner as He predicted the event itself. But *plainly* to have foretold the rejection and crucifixion of the Lord Jesus by Israel, would have been to interfere with the free agency of man; it must either have had the effect of preventing the crucifixion of Christ, or else have given the Jews a valid excuse for killing the Prince of Life.

Not to have foretold the actual results *at all*, on the other hand, would have been to deprive Christianity of one of its main pillars of evidence, the fact that the events of the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth *were predicted* centuries before they took place; it would have been to give some ground for present Jewish unbelief. The alternative was to *reveal* the suffering and death of Christ, but to reveal them *in such a*

¹ Brightman, *Revelation of the Revelation*, 1615, Preface.

manner that "both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel," when banded together to carry out their own wicked wills, were quite unconscious that they were therein doing what His hand and His counsel had "determined before to be done." This secured the good, and avoided the evil; the predictions were full and definite, and yet capable of being misunderstood; as a fact, they were not understood even by the disciples at first, nor are they understood to this day by the Jewish nation. They ought to have known Him, but "*because they knew Him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath day, they fulfilled them in condemning Him.*"

Thus it is possible to possess prophecies of certain events, to read them diligently all our lives, and yet not to understand their fulfilment, even when it takes place before our own eyes. This is sinful unbelief; but there is a temporary inability to understand Divine predictions, which is entirely free from sin, which is inevitable, and indeed ordained of God.

The Book of Daniel is one of the fullest revelations of the future contained in the Bible; it is unequalled for the variety and minuteness of its historical detail, and for its breadth of range, both chronological and geographical. It is closed by this remarkable injunction (which applies, however, *mainly to the last prophecy in the book*): "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, *even to the time of the end*; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased . . . none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand."

This passage seems to warrant three inferences of importance.

1. That though God for certain reasons saw fit to

give this revelation of the future to Daniel at a certain date, *He did not intend it to be understood for centuries*; since, whatever may be the exact limits of the "*time of the end*," it could not include *more* than the course of this dispensation, and the *commencement* of this dispensation was several centuries distant, when Daniel wrote.

2. That even when in the lapse of ages the meaning of this prophecy should become apparent to some, even when "knowledge" should "be increased" and the wise understand, it was the will of God that it should still remain a dark mystery to others, that "none of the wicked should understand."

3. And thirdly, that the comprehension or ignorance of this prophecy, when the time for its being understood at all arrived, would depend rather on the *moral* than on the intellectual state of those who should study it. The *wise* alone should understand it; the *wicked* should not.

The first of these inferences is confirmed by 1 Peter i. 10: "The prophets inquired and searched diligently . . . what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed that *not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister* the things . . . the angels desire to look into." Peter here alludes evidently to this very passage of Daniel who "inquired and searched diligently" about the *time* of the events revealed to him ("O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?"), but he lays it down as a general principle, applicable to other prophets as well, that when they "testified beforehand, of the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow," they ministered *not* unto themselves but unto *us*. That is,

they revealed not a near future, interesting to themselves and their brethren of the Jewish economy especially; but a more distant future, things pertaining to another dispensation altogether, and *not designed to be understood till that dispensation dawned.*

The second of these inferences, that even when light was vouchsafed it would be partial, is confirmed by the words of our Lord, "it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."

The third inference, as to the moral character of those who receive prophetic light, is also confirmed by His words, "if any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." It is "scoffers walking after their own lusts" who are represented as saying "where is the promise of His Coming?" and as being "willingly ignorant" of the purpose of God, as expressed in type and in prophecy.

It is evident therefore that there may be such a thing as a blameless ignorance of the meaning of prophecy, as well as a blameworthy and guilty ignorance of it. The prophets were not to be blamed for not understanding what God did not intend them to understand. Jews and infidels now are to be blamed for a guilty unwillingness to perceive the accomplishment of Old Testament prophecies in New Testament events.

Take as an instance of blameless ignorance, that of the apostles, even after Pentecost, as to the calling of the Gentiles. This, though in one sense a hidden mystery (Eph. iii. 9), had as a matter of fact, long been a revealed purpose of God. It had been foretold in type, in prophecy, and in promise, so that in Romans xiv. the apostle makes no less than four quotations in

succession, to prove that *it was written*, and in Acts xv. James admits that "to this agree the words of the prophets." It was revealed, but not designed to be understood till a certain time, and then a special vision was sent to Peter, and a special revelation on the subject granted to Paul (Eph. iii. 3), to prepare their minds for the fulfilment of these long extant predictions, and to induce them to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Take as an instance of guilty ignorance, in the face of actual fulfilment, Jewish misunderstanding respecting the prophecies of the rejection and death of Messiah the Prince. These events were, as we have seen, distinctly revealed; He was to be "despised and rejected of men," "led as a lamb to the slaughter," "cut off yet not for Himself"; but the revelation was understood neither by "wise" nor "wicked" for a time. When the event had fulfilled and interpreted these predictions, the risen Saviour had still to address, to the two disciples going to Emmaus, that rebuke which assumes both the fact of the revelation and of their duty to understand it: "O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken; ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?" To this day, those who have their minds still blinded through Jewish unbelief, find "a vail untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament," and cannot perceive the accomplishment of the Messianic prophecies in the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth.

Our Lord Himself revealed much that He knew His disciples did not and could not understand at the time; though He also withheld much that they were unprepared to receive. "Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up." It was not till after He

was risen from the dead, that they caught the deep meaning of those pregnant words. "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

Even after the resurrection had taken place, we read, "as yet they knew not the Scriptures, that He should rise again from the dead." They were familiar with the words, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades, neither wilt Thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption"; but, even standing beside the empty sepulchre, the true *meaning* of the words failed to penetrate the mists of Jewish prejudice, which darkened their minds. After Pentecost, however, when Peter had not only the inspired prophecy, but the inspiring Spirit to interpret it, how lucid and authoritative his explanation of these words: "men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. . . . He being a prophet, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that *His* soul was not left in Hades, neither *His* flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses." On the same occasion he asserts that the Pentecostal effusion of the Spirit, at which his audience were ignorantly marvelling, was the fulfilment of Joel's familiar but little understood prediction: "*this is that*, which was spoken by the prophet Joel." How did he know it? The "untoward generation" whom he addressed did not dream that they were witnessing the fulfilment of a Divine prophecy. Their account of the matter was very different; "these men are full of new wine." This proves that *spiritual enlightenment is required for the perception of the*

fulfilment of prophecy, even in startling events which may be taking place before our eyes.

It is not too much to assume that the Apocalypse of St. John was also designed to be progressively understood; that it forms no exception to the general rule, but was given *to reveal the future by degrees, and only in proportion as the understanding of it might conduce to the accomplishment of God's purposes, and the good of His people.* Analogy forbids us to suppose that such a prophecy could be clear all at once, to those to whom it was first given, and it equally forbids the supposition that it was never to be understood or interpreted at all. Can we not perceive reasons why God should in this case act as He had so often acted before, and progressively reveal its meaning? and can we not also perceive means by which such a progressive revelation of the meaning of this prophecy, might, as time rolled on, be made?

Let it be granted for a moment (as it shall we hope be subsequently proved) that this prophecy contains an outline of all the great events of interest to the Church of God, which were to happen prior to the second Advent of Christ, as well as of that Advent itself, and subsequent events; and that not only are the events themselves predicted, but that the actual chronology of some of them is predicted also, the duration for instance of the antichristian apostasy for a period of 1260 years. Supposing this to be the case, it is clear that God, though giving the prophecy in the apostolic age, cannot have *intended* it to be fully understood for many subsequent generations. It was the express will of Christ that the Church should be ever waiting and watching for her Lord, uncertain as to the time of His return. The Holy Spirit could therefore no more have

revealed clearly to the early Church 1260 years of apostasy prior to the return of Christ, than He could have revealed a thousand years of Millennial blessedness; which as we have previously shown would have been inconsistent with His purpose.

Must we therefore conclude: "*this then cannot be the character of the Apocalypse; the same argument that proves that the Millennium must succeed the Advent, proves also that no long period of apostasy can be predicted as to precede it*"? No! but we conclude hence, that if such a period be revealed, it must be in a mysterious form, not intended or adapted for comprehension at the time. If an apostasy of such duration be predicted, it must be so predicted as that the true, full, meaning of the prediction should not be obvious for centuries, and yet be evident, as soon as altered circumstances should render the understanding of the prediction desirable, for the glory of God, and the good of the Church.

A consideration of the problem shows, that the very same end that was to be attained by the Church's ignorance of the true nature and duration of the apostasy in early ages, will in these last days be better attained by her acquaintance with both; and will lead us to admire the wisdom and the grace of Him, who in this prophecy secured for her that ignorance while it was best, and laid up in store for her that knowledge, against the time when it should, in its turn, be most beneficial.

"Known unto God are all His works from the beginning"; the real history and length of this dispensation were of course not only foreseen, but fore-ordained of God. For certain reasons Christ never mentioned them to His disciples, and the Holy Ghost

revealed but little about them to Peter and Paul. What were those reasons? To keep alive loving expectation of the Lord's second Coming, to encourage believers to constant watchfulness, to cheer them by a present hope, and to weaken the power of temptation to earthliness and worldliness, by stamping on all things here uncertainty and evanescence. The first generation of believers took all the promises of His speedy return literally, and lived in the hope that they might remain to the blessed moment, and not sleep but be changed. The Holy Ghost did not undeceive them to any considerable extent; in one case, where the due balance of patience and hope had been in measure lost, express revelations of intervening events were given to restore that balance, but no *periods* were assigned to these events (2 Thess. ii.); the hope was left vivid as ever, if not quite so close at hand. But *this hope was born of inexperience*; blessed and beautiful as it was, it was destined to wither away and be disappointed. The cold logic of facts proved it ill-founded and mistaken, but did not render it the less sanctifying and cheering: blessed be God, there is another kind of hope, born of patience and experience, and founded not on ignorance, but on knowledge. This hope dawned on the Church, as the other sank beneath the horizon, and has gradually brightened ever since; and it is a hope that shall "not make ashamed."

Now it is clear, that had God revealed the duration of the long antichristian apostasy to the early Church, they would at once have been deprived of their Advent hope. What help or consolation could the sufferers and martyrs of early days have found, in gazing forward through well-nigh two thousand years of pagan and papal persecutions, of decay and death, and spiritual

corruption? The appalling prospect was in mercy hidden from their view, foreshortened almost to a point; and the Advent which was to close it all, was the grand object presented to their gaze. How could they have watched for an Advent two thousand years off? what present practical influence could it have exerted over their lives? Their ignorance was evidently best for them, and God in mercy did not remove it. They held in their hands the prophecy, big with the mournful secret; but they guessed not its burden; concluding that the "I come quickly" of their absent Lord, meant "quickly" according to human calculations. To leave them in their ignorance was the gracious purpose of God, and His motive was their comfort and sanctification.

But it is equally clear that for us the case is reversed. A knowledge of the limits of the great antichristian apostasy, would not now *deprive us of hope*, but the very contrary: in fact we need some such revelation to sustain our faith and hope to the end of the long delay; without the chronological data afforded us by the prophecies of Daniel and John, *we* should be in a position of fearful temptation to doubt and despair. Each century of delay would increase the heart-sickness of hope deferred.

Now one generation of His saints is as dear to God as another; we may be sure He did not secure the holiness and happiness of the early Church, at the expense of ours, nor conceal what might be a blessing to us, because the knowledge might not have been a blessing to them. No! He provided some better thing for us, than that we should float uncertainly on the stream of time, not knowing whether we were any nearer to the future than to the past Advent of Christ. He *revealed*, but revealed

in a mystery, all the main events of this dispensation, and He revealed them in just such a way as best to re-live in these last times a "patient waiting for Christ."

And if it be asked *how* this could be done, since inspiration has passed away, and apostolic explanations can no longer be enjoyed, we reply, by the same means by which the interpretation of earlier prophecies was given to Peter, *by their fulfilment before our eyes*, and by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, enabling us so to discern the true nature of events, as *to recognise the correspondence between them and the long familiar predictions*. When the mind free from prejudice, a comparison of inspired prediction and historic fulfilment is sufficient to show the relation between them.

The future, which for the sake of the early Church required to be hidden under a veil of mystery, was of course only the future of *this* dispensation. No prolonged interval was to be interposed between the Church and her hope,—the return of her Lord; but the same concealment was not requisite as regards *subsequent* events and their duration. If then the principle for which we contend be true, there will be found an air of mystery about the times and seasons mentioned *prior to the Advent vision*, and an absence of it subsequently. This is exactly what we *do* find. There are eight passages in the earlier part of the book, where periods of time are named by phrases which are obviously uncommon, *not* the ordinary or natural mode of designating the period they seem to suggest, but all having an air of mystery. In the vision which immediately follows that of the Advent, on the contrary, a period is six times over mentioned in *the simplest possible form*, "a thousand years." Why this difference? The real length of *this* age of sin and suffering was to

be hidden for a time ; but there was no need to hide the real length of the blessed age of purity, peace, and joy which is to succeed it.

We conclude then, that since God has constantly acted on this principle of gradually revealing the meaning of His own predictions, both in the Old and New Testaments ; since we can see special reasons why He should do so, and a simple means by which, in this case, He could do so ; and since the construction of the book affords internal evidence of such an intention ;—that there is the strongest presumption that the *meaning* of the apocalyptic prophecies was designed to become clear to the Church *only by degrees*.

We conclude, that though the Apocalypse was not, like the visions of Daniel, to be supplemented by later revelations, and understood only in the light reflected back from these, yet it was to receive explanation from other sources, so that while it was a mystery in the early ages of the Church, it should unfold its own meaning gradually, during the course of the dispensation, and become increasingly clear and consequently increasingly precious, in the last days.

We conclude also, that like Daniel's predictions and all other prophecy, it is not intended *ever* to become *self-evidently clear*, that even when understood by "the wise," its meaning will still be hidden from the world, and that consequently the true interpretation, whenever it shall arise, will have many adversaries, and be rejected with contempt by "the wicked," even while it is being fulfilled before their eyes.

These legitimate conclusions will lead us to expect *the primitive interpretation of the premillennial visions of the Apocalypse, to be the least correct* ; though it might be, probably would be, right as to events

subsequent to this dispensation. They prepare us to weigh with candour the interpretations of later times, and forbid us to reject, on the ground of novelty, any view that attaches to these mysterious predictions a meaning worthy of Divine inspiration, and calculated to accomplish good in the Church, even though it may have been unknown to the Fathers, and even though it may be rejected and ridiculed by multitudes. These conclusions will lead us to expect the true interpretation to be found only after many centuries of the Church's history had rolled away, when the bright hope of early days had quite died out; and to *have the effect of* quickening the Church afresh to the patient waiting for Christ. But we should expect also that the true clue to the mysteries of the Apocalypse, once discovered, would not be immediately applied correctly; so that it would never practically have the effect of leading the Church to think the Lord's return a very distant event, however much it might, theoretically considered, seem likely to do so. In other words, that God would not suddenly illuminate these predictions and so translate the Church at a bound from perfect ignorance to perfect knowledge of the fore-appointed length and character of this dispensation; but that He would *enlighten her darkness gradually*, by leaving a measure of obscurity till towards the close; would allow her still, as at the first, to expect the great consummation long before its predestined date, and sustain her by revealing fresh grounds of hope, based on more accurate apprehension of the truth, as each erroneous anticipation was disappointed by the event. We shall consequently expect to find every generation of saints, after the true key to the book has once been found, *making advances on the last*, and the *discrepancies existing between their views*

will not stumble us, or lead us to reject them all as ungrounded. We shall trace the vein of truth growing wider and deeper; we shall watch the ever brightening dawn of the true light; and far from deeming this gradual discovery of the meaning of the apocalyptic prophecies, with its consequent inevitable discrepancies, a proof that they have no meaning, or none worth seeking, we shall accept it as a proof of the purpose of God to act, still, as ever, on the principle of progressive revelation.

Now on reviewing the history of apocalyptic interpretation we find that the early Christians were right in their interpretation of the visions which follow the second Advent; they understood correctly, that which it was not the purpose of God to *conceal* from them. *All the primitive expositors and teachers were premillennialists.* With the exception of Origen, who spiritualized everything, and of a few who denied the inspiration and apostolicity of the book, all the early Fathers up to the time of Constantine, including Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Victorinus, Methodius, Lactantius, held that the first resurrection of Revelation xx. was a literal resurrection, prior to a personal reign of Christ on earth. The expectation of a spiritual Millennium, to precede the Coming of the Lord, grew up only in the more corrupt ages of the Church, after her union with the world in the days of Constantine.

As to the previous visions of the book,—the commentaries which have appeared may be arranged in three distinct classes, as Preterist, Futurist, or Presentist.

The first or PRETERIST scheme considers these prophecies to have been fulfilled in the downfall of the Jewish nation and the old Roman empire, limiting their

range thus to the first six centuries of the Christian era, and making Nero Antichrist.

This scheme originated with the Jesuit Alcazar towards the end of the sixteenth century; it has been held and taught under various modifications by Grotius, Hammond, Bousset, Eichhorn, and other German commentators, Moses Stuart, and Dr. Davidson. Moses Stuart bases it on the denial of the very principle for which we are contending; he takes it for granted that the writer had an "*immediate* object in view when he wrote the book," and that the *original readers of the Apocalypse understood it*; and argues that it must therefore treat of such matters as they could understand. But his only *reason* for this assertion is that *he cannot conceive* how "a sensible man" could write a book "which would be unintelligible to those to whom it was addressed"; and he proceeds to admit that there is no *evidence* extant to show that the early Christians understood it. Further on he says that "very soon after this age, it was *so* interpreted that grave obstacles were raised to the reception of the book as canonical." And looking back from the end of the eighth century, after reviewing all the previous expositors of Revelation, he says, "we find that no real and solid advances were yet made" towards a satisfactory explanation of the book. Thus he *assumes* that its first readers were intended to understand it, and assumes that they did do so, while admitting that there is not the slightest *proof* to support either assumption, and that the light if ever possessed was very quickly lost. His work evinces much learning but little spirituality, and treats the Apocalypse too much as a merely human production.¹

¹ Almost all German writers adopt this rationalistic attitude towards the Apocalypse.—Ep,

The second or PRESENTIST interpretation is that historic Protestant view of these prophecies, which considers them to predict the great events to happen in the world and in the Church, from St. John's time to the Coming of the Lord; which sees in the Church of Rome, and in the Papacy, the fulfilment of the prophecies of Babylon and of the Beast, and which interprets the times of the Apocalypse on the year-day system.

This view originated about the eleventh century, with those who even then began to protest against the growing corruptions of the Church of Rome. It grew among the Waldenses, Wickliffites, and Hussites, into a consistent scheme of interpretation, and was embraced with enthusiasm, and held, with intense conviction of its truth, by the Reformers of the sixteenth century. In their hands it became a powerful and formidable weapon, to attack and expose the mighty apostasy, with which they were called to do battle. From this time it spread with a rapidity that was astonishing, so that ere long it was received as a self-evident and fundamental truth among Protestant Churches everywhere. It nerved the Reformers of England, France, Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, and Sweden, and the martyrs of Italy and Spain; it decided the conscientious and timid adherents of the Papacy to cross the Rubicon, and separate from the so-called Catholic Church; and it has kept all the Reformed Churches since from attempting reunion with Rome.

It was held and taught by Joachim Abbas, Walter Brute, Luther, Zwingli, Melancthon, Calvin, and all the rest of the Reformers; by Bullinger, Bale, and Foxe; by Brightman and Mede, Sir Isaac and Bishop Newton, Vitranga, Daubuz, and Whiston, as well as by Faber, Cunningham, Frere, Birks, and Elliott; no two of these

may agree on all questions of minor detail, but they agree on the grand outline, and each one has added more or less to the strength and solidity of the system, by his researches. It met, of course, with intense and bitter opposition from the Church it branded as Babylon, and the power it denounced as Antichrist, and to this day it is rejected by all who in any way maintain or defend them.

The third or FUTURIST view is that which teaches that the prophetic visions of Revelation, from chapters iv. to xix., prefigure *events still wholly future*, and not to take place till just at the close of this dispensation. It supposes an instant plunge of the apocalyptic prophecy into the distant future of the consummation. This view gives the literal Israel a large place in the Apocalypse, and expects a personal infidel Antichrist, who shall bitterly oppress the saints for three years and a half, near the date of the second Advent, thus interpreting *time* as well as much else in the Apocalypse, *literally*.

This view is, in a *certain sense*, the most ancient of the three: for the primitive Fathers agree in several of these latter points. In its present form, however, it may be said to have originated, at the end of the sixteenth century, with the Jesuit Ribera, who, moved like Alcazar, to relieve the Papacy from the terrible stigma cast upon it by the Protestant interpretation, tried to do so, by referring these prophecies to the distant *future*, instead of like Alcazar to the distant *past*. For a considerable period this view was confined to Romanists, and was refuted by several masterly Protestant works. But of late years it has sprung up afresh, and sprung up (strange to say) among Protestants. It was revived by such writers as the two Maitlands, Burgh, Tyso, Dr.

Todd, the leaders of the "Brethren" generally, and by some Tractarian expositors also. It is held thus by *extreme* parties; by those who, though Protestants, are ashamed of the Reformation, speak of it as an unwarrantable schism, and verge as closely on Rome as is possible; *and* by those who, though Protestants, deem the glorious Reformation to have stopped grievously short of the mark, and see so much of Babylon still, in the Reformed Churches, that they refuse to regard them as having come out of Babylon, or as victors over Antichrist. It is held under a greater variety of modifications than the other two, no two writers agreeing as to what the symbols *do* prefigure, but all agreeing that they do *not* prefigure anything that has ever yet taken place.

Those who hold this view support it, among other arguments, by the authority of the primitive Church. They say: "the Fathers had apostolic tradition; they had no controversial bias; their opinion ought to have great weight; the historical interpretation was unknown in the Church for one thousand years or more; our view is the original view of the early Christians. *They* expected that Antichrist would be an individual man; *so do we*. *They* expected him to be an infidel atheistic blasphemer, not a Christian bishop; *so do we*. *They* believed his tyranny would last three years and a half immediately prior to the Coming of Christ; *so do we*. *They* took the days, weeks, and months of the Apocalypse literally; *so do we*."

Now we readily admit this agreement (though indeed it is by no means so perfect as is implied), and reply that herein lies a *very strong presumption against the Futurist scheme*. *It is a return to that early interpretation of the prophecies, which was necessarily*

defective and erroneous, seeing it was not the purpose of God, to permit a premature comprehension of the nature and length of this dispensation. It is a view which rejects the light, as to the *purposes* of God, which experience of the *providence* of God has afforded. It exalts the impressions of ignorance, above the ripe results of mature knowledge, and claims prestige for primitive views, on points where later views are necessarily preferable. It recommends those who are of full age to return to the opinions of childhood, forgetting that errors excusable in children are inexcusable in men. The early Christians knew nothing of the marvellous ecclesiastical phenomena with which we are acquainted; their ignorance of the true scope of the prophecy was unavoidable; we have seen the awful apostasy that has lorded it for more than twelve hundred years in the Church of God; similar ignorance in us is without excuse, for experience ought to teach. *The Futurist view denies progressive revelation*, and asserts that the early Church understood the Apocalypse better than the Church of after-times; which is contrary to the analogy of Scripture, and to the evident purpose of God.

Two main systems of interpretation of this final revelation of Scripture are then before us: which is likely to be the true? The one characterized the infancy of the Church, the other was the offspring of mature experience: the one sprang up amid utter ignorance of the actual purpose of God; the other in view of His accomplished providence: the one can never be brought to any *test*; the other at every point exposes itself to critical examination: the one was and is held by the apostate and persecuting Church of Rome; the other by multitudes of confessors and a glorious army of martyrs: the one leaves us to form our own opinion

of the greatest fact in the history of the Church, the Papal system of ecclesiastical corruption and tyranny; the other gives us God's infallible and awful judgment about it: the one was never more than a barren speculation; the other has been, and is, a *mighty power for good*: the one leaves us in dismal doubt as to our place in the prophetic calendar; the other makes us lift up our heads, to catch the glow of the coming sunrise.

The presumption is surely *against* the modern revival of the primitive view. A return to primitive *doctrine* is good; no progressive revelation of the dogma of justification by faith, for instance, was to be expected; innovation in questions of faith is condemned; we are "earnestly to contend for the faith *once delivered to the saints*." But prophecy is not doctrine, and its very nature implies that it must be capable of receiving elucidation from the course of providence. *The Protestant historical system of apocalyptic interpretation is based on this fact, and has consequently a strong presumption in its favour.* But presumption is not proof; and the question is of such importance that a fuller examination must now be attempted.

Three main points require to be settled before we can hope to arrive at the meaning of the prophecies of the Revelation.

1. Is the Apocalypse to be understood literally? and if not, on what principle is it to be interpreted?

2. Is it a fulfilled or partially fulfilled prophecy? or does it refer to events still future?

3. Is it a Christian or a Jewish prophecy? That is, does it bear to the Church, and to her fortunes in the world, the same relation that earlier prophecy bore to Israel, and to their fortunes in the world? These questions will be considered, in the chapters which follow.

CHAPTER II

CONSIDERATION OF CERTAIN BROAD PRINCIPLES, ON WHICH THE APOCALYPSE IS TO BE INTERPRETED.—IT IS A SYMBOLIC PROPHECY, AND MUST BE TRANSLATED INTO ORDINARY LANGUAGE BEFORE IT CAN BE UNDERSTOOD.

IT is obvious to the most superficial reader, that in its actual texture and construction, the Apocalypse is *a record of visions that are past*. All allow that it is, nevertheless, as to its meaning, *a prophecy of events that are future*, or *were future* at the time that the visions were granted to St. John. The angel calls the book a prophecy, "seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand." Of its *prophetic* character there can therefore be no more question, than that its *form* is a record of past visions. In the strictest sense then no one understands the book *literally*; for the statement, "I saw a beast rise up out of the sea," taken literally, is in no sense whatever a prophecy; it is a narrative of a past event, not a prediction of a future one.

Such literalism as this is divinely excluded. John beheld things which were to take place "hereafter," but the future was signified to the apostle in a series of visions.

The book is "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel, unto His servant John."

To *signify* is to *show by signs*, to intimate your meaning, not in plain words, but by signs and symbols.

Now it were clearly folly to *confound the sign with the thing signified*. The first verse of the book clearly indicates that its true meaning is veiled under significant figures, and that a process of translation must take place before that meaning can be reached. Each symbol used must be separately studied, and its force gathered, from its context, from comparison with other Scriptures, from its own nature, and from such explanations as are given in the prophecy itself, before we can expect to discover the mind of the Spirit of God in this book.

If on opening a letter from a friend, the first sentence that met the eye was, "I write in Latin in order that my letter may not be understood by all," we should at once be prepared to translate as we read; we should not pore over a certain combination of letters and syllables, trying in vain to make some intelligible English word out of them; we should say the *word* is so and so, but the *meaning* is so and so. In reading the symbolic portion of the Apocalypse, we are bound to do the same; on no other principle can anything like a consistent interpretation be attained. The nature of the case forbids it. And yet an opposite maxim of interpretation is often laid down;—take everything literally, unless you are forced by impossibility in the nature of things to give a symbolic signification. This is like saying, if you can find any combination of letters or syllables in this Latin letter, that will form any English word, take it as English, but where you cannot possibly make anything out of them as English, then no doubt they are Latin. What a singularly lucid communication would be the result of such a system of interpretation! And

yet it is in connection with the Apocalypse too common, among some, whose spirituality and intelligence ought to be fruitful of more wisdom. Such interpreters argue in defence of the monstrosities evoked by their system, somewhat in this way: "The Nile was once literally turned to blood, we doubt not therefore that this prediction, Revelation viii. 8, 'the third part of the sea became blood,' means just what it says; God, who wrought the one miracle, can accomplish the other." Undoubtedly: the question is not what God *can* do, but what He here says He *will* do. Now Exodus is a literal history; when it says the river became blood *it means it*; Revelation is a symbolic prophecy, when therefore it says "the third part of the sea became blood," *it does not mean it*, but it means something entirely different; and it is needful not only to substitute a future for a past time, but to translate these symbols into plain language, in order to ascertain what the meaning really is.

It would be ludicrous, were it not painful, to contemplate the absurdities and inconsistencies, which have arisen from a neglect of this simple and almost self-evident maxim of interpretation, demanded by the opening verse of the book, as well as by its whole construction. To overlook it is to turn the most majestic and comprehensive prophecy in the Bible into a chaos of vague monstrosities, unworthy of being attributed to inspiration; it is "to degrade the highest and latest of God's holy revelations, into a grotesque patchwork of unmeaning prodigies."

Prophecy, like science, has its own peculiar language; *for understanding the prophecies, therefore, as Sir Isaac Newton justly observes, we are in the first place to acquaint ourselves with the figurative language of the*

prophets. When God deigns to converse with man, He must use the language of man. The Scriptures were designed for the whole world; hence it was meet, that their predictions should be couched in what may be termed a universal language. But the only universal language in existence, is the language of hieroglyphics. *The key to the scriptural hieroglyphics is furnished by Scripture itself*, and when the import of each hieroglyphic is thus ascertained, there is little difficulty in translating, as it were, a hieroglyphical prophecy, into the phraseology of modern language.

It is hardly needful to add that there are exceptions, in the Apocalypse. Plain predictive sentences and literal explanatory clauses are interspersed here and there, amid the symbols of the book. They stand out from the general text, as distinctly as a few words of English introduced in a page of a Greek book would do; it needs no signpost to say "adopt a literal interpretation here." They speak for themselves; common sense dispenses with critical canons, and recognizes them unaided.

Any system of interpretation that violates the fundamental law of the book is thereby stamped as erroneous. The system that says: "Babylon means Babylon; and the literal ancient Babylon will, we are bound to believe, be revived," must be false. In the Apocalypse, Babylon does *not* mean Babylon, nor Jerusalem Jerusalem, nor the temple the temple; the system therefore that says "all this Jewish imagery proves that the book has reference to the future of the Jewish nation, and not to the future of the Church," must be false. All this Jewish imagery is *symbolic*; these things are used as *signs*. Everything connected with Israel was typical of things connected with the Church. The *things signified*

must therefore be *Christian*, otherwise the sign and the thing signified, would be one and the same. The system that says the New Jerusalem is a literal city, 1500 miles square and 1500 high (!), made of gems and gold, *must be false*; the New Jerusalem is a sign; the thing signified, is the glorified Church of Christ, as comparison with other Scripture proves.

The Divine explanations attached to some of the earliest symbols employed in the book, furnish the key by which much of its sign-language is to be interpreted. They are to the symbology of the Apocalypse, what the Rosetta stone was to the hieroglyphics of Egypt. "The seven stars are the angels of the seven Churches, and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven Churches." The seven-branched candlestick was one of the most important emblematic vessels in the tabernacle "which was a figure for the time then present" of spiritual realities. John saw seven separate candlesticks, and saw Christ the great High Priest, walking in their midst, like Aaron, trimming his lamps. He tells John what the emblem represents; the seven candlesticks symbolized the seven Churches of Asia. This explanation authorizes us whenever we meet the same symbol of a candlestick, to attach to it the same signification; and it does more. The candlestick was *one* feature of the tabernacle and temple economy, in which *every* feature was typical of heavenly things; many other symbols borrowed from the same system, appear in the Apocalypse: *this one key unlocks them all*. We have no right to say that the ark of the covenant, the altar, the sea of glass, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony, the court, the holy city, the New Jerusalem, the priests and their garments, or the worshippers, are to be taken literally. We are bound on the contrary to

interpret them *all* on one harmonious principle. The seven candlesticks means seven Christian Churches, that is, they are a perfect representation of the Christian Church. *A Christian and not a Jewish sense, then, must attach to all the rest.*

The seven stars are not a part of the tabernacle system, but they are equally symbols, standing for a reality of an entirely different nature. Whatever the angels of the Churches were, they were not *stars*; and whenever we meet with this symbol in the book, we may be sure from the Lord's translation of it here, *that it will not mean literal stars*, but rulers, governors, chief men, messengers, or something analogous. "The seven stars are the angels of the seven Churches." What sort of consistency would there be in the book, if a star in one place meant a ruler, and in the next a literal star? Language used in so indeterminate and inexplicable a way, would cease to answer the purpose of language; no definite meaning could attach to it. The study of the Apocalypse might well be abandoned, as more hopeless than that of the hieroglyphics, or the arrow-headed inscriptions of remotest antiquity; for these we possess keys, for the Apocalypse none, *if our Lord's own explanations are rejected as such.*

There is another indication of the same kind in the twice repeated expression, "which say they are Jews and are not, but do lie." The parties alluded to were literal Jews, but being unbelievers, our Lord here denies to them the name, thereby taking from "*Jew*" thenceforth its old literal meaning, and confining it to a higher sense. "He is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart. These explanations and indications at the

commencement of this prophecy, are like a Divine warning against the error of taking these Jewish emblems literally; in the Apocalypse they must uniformly be interpreted as *signs of other things*.

Finally, the principle of progressive revelation demands that these visions should be taken as literal predictions of a coming crisis at the end of the age. Other prophecies had already brought down the chain of events to the destruction and fall of Jerusalem, and our Lord Himself, in treating of it, passed on to the final crisis, of which it was a precursor. The one and only period unilluminated by prophetic light was *the Church's history on earth*. Our Lord had revealed little, save its general character as a time of tribulation; the other apostles had foretold certain events which were to characterize its course; it remained for the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to Him, and which He now sends, as His last gift to the Churches, to map it out in detail, and present in a mystic form all its leading outlines. If the Apocalypse merely went over again the events of the final crisis, it would not be an advance on all previous revelation, as its place in the canon of Scripture warrants our concluding that it is. To be this, it must be a symbolical history of the Christian dispensation.

CHAPTER III

THE APOCALYPSE IS A CONTINUOUS PROPHECY EXTENDING FROM ITS OWN TIME, TO THE CONSUMMATION OF ALL THINGS.—IMPORTANCE OF HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE, IN ORDER TO ITS CORRECT INTERPRETATION.—IT IS A PROPHECY CONCERNING THE EXPERIENCES OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, IN THE WORLD, AND NOT CONCERNING THOSE OF THE JEWISH NATION.

VERY serious are the consequences of a refusal to admit uniformly and consistently, the symbolic character of the visions of the Apocalypse. Like most errors, it brings further error in its train, and renders almost impossible any advance in the comprehension of the book. It answers beforehand, independently of investigation, the question whether the prophecies of the Apocalypse are fulfilled or not. If these emblematic visions are read under the impression that these things are to come to pass *literally*, the conclusion that the book consists entirely of unfulfilled prophecies is inevitable, for most assuredly no such things ever have come to pass.

Literalists must therefore be *Futurists*, and the abandonment of the first error is almost certain to lead to the abandonment of the second. The moment we begin to translate the symbolic into ordinary language, the prediction assumes such a very different shape, that it is no longer a self-evident fact that it must be unfulfilled. The inquiry is on the contrary awakened, has

this happened? and we turn to history for an answer. If a fulfilment has taken place, we shall then be on the road to discover it; one such fulfilment clearly established will be a clue to others; and every fulfilment so discovered, will be an argument for the truth of that system of interpretation which led to the discovery.

Here we are met by an objection; some are found rash enough to condemn that system of interpretation which leads to the comparison of prophecy with history, on the ground that it does so. The sun, say they, requires no candle to show that it shines; the Bible requires no light from history; history is merely human; we are told to search the Scriptures, but we are nowhere told to search Eusebius, or Gibbon, or Hallam.

Now this reasoning, though often advanced in the most oracular way, as if it settled the question, is shallow, and based on fallacies; and yet it misleads many, calculated as it is to flatter ignorance, to foster indolence, and to encourage dogmatism, by throwing the reins on the neck of imagination, which is by it left free, to invent future facts and fulfilments, as it feels inclined. A little reflection will show the superficial nature of the objection.

A knowledge of history is needful to the intelligent comprehension of prophecy. The Bible itself contains a large amount of history, from which alone we learn the fulfilment of many of its earlier prophecies, and without which we might still be expecting a fulfilment, which took place hundreds of years ago. What are the four Gospels, and the book of Acts, but histories, divinely inspired histories of course, but from the point of view we are now considering, their inspiration is mainly important as securing their accuracy and authenticity. They are *authentic records* of a series of facts, which

took place eighteen hundred years ago, in a distant land ; for a knowledge of which consequently we *must* be indebted to the testimony of others. By the help of such testimony we compare the facts that have occurred, with the predictions of prophecy, and perceive the marvellous and accurate fulfilment. Without such testimony we never could have done this ; and to be ignorant of the existence and nature of such testimony, is to be practically without it. But Bible history, while it begins with the first Adam and the first Paradise, does not, like Bible prophecy, reach on to the coming of the Second Adam in glory to re-establish Paradise on earth. It ends about A.D. 60, and we have only uninspired though authentic records of all that has happened since. Now according to these objectors, we are not to make use of these ; and to compare New Testament prophecy with profane history. Either then there must be absolutely no prophetic light thrown by the Holy Ghost on the last eighteen hundred years, or else God does not intend us to have the benefit of it. Supposing a fulfilment clear as daylight to have taken place, we must remain in ignorance of it, unless God were pleased now to add an appendix to the Bible, to record facts which many trustworthy historians have already recorded. Revelation never teaches things which common sense is sufficient to discover. For instance, a tenfold division of the Roman Empire was predicted by Daniel, prior to the establishment of the kingdom of Christ on earth. The Roman Empire was still existing in its integrity when John closed the canon of Scripture by his prophecy, which repeats the prediction. Blot out now all historical records, deprive the Church of the help of all uninspired testimony, and Christians must to this day remain in ignorance of the solemnly momentous

fact, that this prediction has been fulfilled during the last twelve hundred years, and the strong presumption to be derived therefrom that the Coming of the Lord is nigh, even at the doors. Nor will it do to say that that is a notorious fact, evident to our senses without historical testimony. No: our knowledge of it depends upon uninspired testimony, historical or otherwise; and the question is not, to what *extent* may we make use of uninspired records to elucidate inspired predictions, but, may we make use of them *at all*! The answer is clear, *we must*, or for ever remain ignorant whether the holy prophecies of the Word of God, regarding post-canonical events, are fulfilled or not.

A still more rash assertion is also made; it is said that no events of this parenthetical Church dispensation (save those of its closing crisis) are, or could be, subjects of prophecy.

That this statement is not true is proved by the above instance, and by many more that might be alleged. But it is evident that a knowledge of history is needful to warrant the statement! How without such knowledge, can it be ascertained that the visions of Revelation for instance, do *not* present a connected outline of the leading events between the past and future Advents of Christ? A knowledge of what has actually taken place is as needful to justify a denial, as an assertion of the fact. We must know a person as well before we can pronounce that a certain portrait does *not* resemble him, as in order to assert that it *does*.

This prejudice against the use of history in the interpretation of prophecy, seems frequently to be based on a confusion which is made, between the facts recorded by historians and the opinions of the historians who record them. Grant that the latter being merely human

are worthless, the former are none the less important. Trustworthy historians record events which *they* neither invented nor caused, but which occurred under God's providential government; it was He who caused or permitted these events; they are in one sense as Divine as prophecy; that is, both proceed from Him. Prophecy is God telling us beforehand what shall happen; authentic history is men telling us what has, in the providence of God, taken place. In truth each is best understood in the light of the other; the moral features of events occupy the main place in the prophecy, so that by its study we learn to weigh things in God's balances, to judge of men and systems by a Divine standard. But the history also elucidates the prophecy; when we see what has been allowed to occur in fulfilment of a prediction, we learn what was intended in the announcement, and understand the perhaps previously mysterious form in which it was made. Apparent contradictions are reconciled, difficulties are removed, and we are filled with admiration and awe at the foreknowledge and wisdom evinced in predictions, over which the ignorant can only puzzle or speculate. Authentic history ought not to be deprecated as merely the wisdom of this world; it is something more, it is a record of God's providential government of the world. It is impossible to assign any reason, why the wisdom and knowledge derived from historical research, should not be made available, as well as every other kind of science, for the elucidation of Scripture.

We dare not exclude the light afforded by history, in the endeavour to answer the questions suggested above: *Is the prophecy of the Apocalypse fulfilled, or partly so; or is it still entirely unfulfilled?* and is it in its general scope Christian or Jewish? The two inquiries are so

closely related, that it is impossible to pursue them apart; it is evident that if the Revelation be partially fulfilled, it is in the history of the Christian Church we shall be able to trace the fulfilment, seeing the Jewish nation was already cast away,—“broken off” for a time,—before this prophecy was published; and it is equally evident that if it relate to the future history of restored Israel, no fulfilment can have yet commenced, seeing Israel is still scattered, and Jerusalem trodden down of the Gentiles.

And first, what says the Apocalypse of itself? To whom is it addressed? This is a fair and fundamental question; it is thus that we judge of the object and scope of the Epistles of the New Testament, and of the “burdens” of the ancient prophets. The Epistles are addressed “to the saints and to the faithful in Christ Jesus,” or “to the Church” in such and such a place. Observing this, we argue, the Jews and the ungodly have no right to appropriate the contents of these letters; they are for believers in Christ alone; confusion will result if unbelievers take to themselves these Divine messages. The argument applies with equal force to the Apocalypse. It is addressed to Christ’s “servants,” “to the seven Churches of Asia.” This is reiterated; the expressions occur both at the opening and at the close of the book. “The Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show unto *His servants* things which must shortly be done.” “I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things, *in the Churches.*” On reading these distinct declarations, simple unsophisticated minds would surely conclude, that the Jews and unbelievers in general, have no more to do with this prophecy than they have with the Epistle to the Ephesians. They may possibly be alluded to in the one,

as in the other, but it is not for them, it is not mainly concerned with them; *it is for us*; Christians alone were Christ's servants in the days of Domitian, when John saw and heard these things; to Christians alone was it sent, the seven Churches represented the *whole* Church, the prophecy is for the Christian Church, and they take the children's bread to give it to outsiders, who would rob the Church of her Lord's last gift.

It is no use to say, yes! but though given to the Church, it might still be a revelation of the counsels of God about others than herself. *It might*; the Epistle to the Ephesians *might*, have been a treatise on the state and prospects of the lost ten tribes, but it was not; the vision of Nebuchadnezzar might have been a vision of the restoration of Israel, but it *was* not; the visions of Daniel might have been visions of the seven Churches in Asia, but they *were* not, nor was it likely that they would be, nor is it likely that the Lord Jesus in His last prophetic communication to His cherished Church, from whom for eighteen hundred years He was to be hidden, would have nothing more pressing, personal, and important to reveal to her, than the destiny of a future Jewish remnant, with which she has nothing in common, and the final judgments on a world, from which she is already delivered, and from which, according to this theory, she will have been previously removed. Did she need no guidance, no comfort, for the years of earthly pilgrimage that lay before her? True, He had before revealed in broad outline the sufferings that awaited her, and the glories that should follow; but had He, who knows the end from the beginning, and who foresaw all that has since happened, no further words of warning and of cheer for His long-to-be-tempted, and sorely-to-be-persecuted Church? Strange,

that such an idea should find place in Christian hearts! What! shall our Lord be less kind and careful than an earthly friend or parent? Do these interpreters indeed believe that God inspired this prophecy, and that Christ loves His Church?

Further, what does the Apocalypse say about its own scope, and about the time to which it refers? Again the first verse of the book supplies a simple and direct answer. It was given to show to Christ's servants "*things that must shortly come to pass*," and the next verse urges the study of the book, on the ground that "*the time is at hand*." In the last chapter the angel speaks of these things as "things that must shortly be done," and commands John not to seal the sayings of the prophecy, for the same reason, "*the time is at hand*." These words *may* measure time by the thousand-years-to-a-day scale, may not mean "at hand" according to human, but only according to Divine chronology. But it is not likely that this is the case, because in another closely related prophecy, we have expressions of *an exactly opposite character*, which can be proved to measure time by the *ordinary standard*. Daniel is twice or thrice told to shut up and seal certain parts of his prophecies, which related to events to take place in this dispensation, "even to the time of the end," because "the time appointed was *great*" and "the vision for *many days*." Now the most distant of those events was *near* if measured by the Divine scale, distant only according to the common computation. *If these expressions in Daniel are used in their merely human sense, we have every reason to suppose that it is the same with the similar expressions in Revelation.* To Daniel, God said, "shut up the words and seal the book, even to the time of the end," and to John, when these things had

already begun to come to pass, the angel says, "seal not the sayings, for the time is at hand." It would not have been at hand in the ordinary sense, if the prophecy relates mainly to still future events. We have every reason therefore to believe, that it relates, on the contrary, to events that began soon after the apostle received the revelation, and that the fulfilment has been in progress ever since.

Another strong presumption that the visions of the Apocalypse form a continuous prophecy, stretching over the whole of this dispensation, exists in their analogy with the prophecies of Daniel. The resemblance between these two is marked and close; both are in the symbolic language, both were given to aged saints who were greatly beloved, who were confessors and all but martyrs; the "Man clothed in linen and girded with the gold of Uphaz, whose face was as lightning, whose eyes were as fire, and whose voice was as the voice of a multitude," who addressed Daniel, on the banks of the Hiddekel, is unquestionably the same Divine Being who addressed John in Patmos. The prophecies were in both cases communicated when the temple was in ruins, and the Jews dispersed; and both Daniel and John had been trained in a school of peculiar experiences, to fit them to become recipients of these sacred revelations. We take then the symbolic prophecies of Daniel, as those likely to afford the most direct analogy to the symbolic prophecies of the Apocalypse, and we ask, do *they* date from contemporary events, or from a far distant future? and do they present a *continuous* sketch of the interval they cover, or do they dwell exclusively on salient and distant crises?

The question scarcely needs a reply. The fourfold image seen by Nebuchadnezzar begins with the Baby-

lonian monarchy of which he was the first great head. "Thou art this head of gold." It pursues its even course down through all the Times of the Gentiles, and ends with the Millennial kingdom of Christ.

The second prophecy of Daniel, that of the four great Beasts or empires, was given forty-nine years later, in the first year of Belshazzar, that is, towards the end of Israel's captivity, when the days of Babylon's glory were fast drawing to a close, when the time was rapidly approaching for the kingdom to be numbered, finished, divided, and given to others. Accordingly, while the first Beast is still the Babylonian empire, the first particular noticed in the prophecy, is the plucking of the eagle's wings, on the lion's back. The prophecy thus starts from the diminished glory of the latter end of Babylon, rather than from the golden splendour of its commencement, that is, *from contemporary events*. It presents a second and fuller sketch of the political history of the Gentile world (for the spiritual power, the Little Horn, is glanced at principally in its political aspects), and traces the main features of the Times of the Gentiles, down to the same point as before, the everlasting kingdom of the Most High.

The third prophecy of Daniel, that of the Ram and the He-goat, with its four horns and its little horn, was given, as its opening states, in the third year of Belshazzar, two years later than the preceding prophecy. It opens with the Medo-Persian empire, and the conquests of Cyrus. Now when this prophecy was given, Cyrus had already been reigning seven years in Persia, and the rise of his empire was close at hand. It gives a continuous history of the Medo-Persian and Grecian empires, and of the Mohammedan politico-religious power, thus ranging from soon after its own date, to far on in the Christian era.

The fourth prophecy of Daniel, that of the *seventy weeks* to elapse between the end of the captivity, and the Coming of Messiah the Prince, began to be fulfilled about eighty years after it was delivered, when Artaxerxes gave the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem. But the decree of Cyrus, to restore and build the temple, and to liberate the Jews from captivity, was promulgated only two years after the date of this prophecy, and would no doubt be taken by the Jews, at first, as marking the commencement of the seventy weeks. This prophecy includes a period of about five hundred years, and reaches from the restoration under Nehemiah to the final destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. Its object was less to indicate intervening events, than to measure *the period up to the great event of human history*; the previous and the following prophecies delineate the main outlines of the history of the period.

And lastly the fifth and great closing prophecy of Daniel, given by our Lord Himself, and recorded in the 11th and 12th chapters, *begins with the date of the vision*, "the third year of Cyrus king of Persia," and takes even a retrospective glance to the first year of Darius the Mede (chap. xi. 1). It predicts the succession of the Persian monarchs, condensing into one sentence the reigns of Cambyses, Smerdis, and Darius Hystaspes, down to the overthrow of the rich and mighty Xerxes, who stirred up all against the realm of Grecia. It traces next the history of the Ptolemies and of the Seleucidæ, down to the desolations and persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes, gives full detail of the career of the Wilful King, and of the closing events of this dispensation, ending with the deliverance of Israel, and the resurrection of the just. It embraces thus a period of at least 2400 years, and extends from the fall of the *typical*, to the

fall of the *antitypical* Babylon ; so that *all* the historical prophecies of Daniel start from events close at hand when they were given, and predict with varying degrees of fullness, a series of other events, to follow in regular sequence, to the point at which they close.

Now, judging by analogy, we should expect that when He who revealed to Daniel the things noted in the Scripture of truth, came six hundred years later, to reveal to John "things that must shortly come to pass," He would follow the same method. On opening the Apocalypse, this expectation is confirmed ; we find that it starts, like all Daniel's prophecies, from "the things that are," and that it ends like them, with the great consummation. In the nature of things, it could not go over *all* the ground of the older prophecies. Many of the events foretold by Daniel had already transpired. The three great empires had risen and fallen ; the fourth was then in its glory. Antiochus had desolated Judæa and defiled the temple ; Messiah had come, and had been cut off ; Titus had destroyed Jerusalem. So much of the journey lay behind John in Patmos ; these facts were no longer themes for prophecy, but materials for history. Blindness in part had happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles should come in. The Apocalypse was not given in the sacred tongue of the Hebrews, but in Gentile Greek, just as Daniel's two earlier prophecies, which refer to the times of the Gentiles, without much allusion to Israel, are in Gentile Chaldee. Taking these altered circumstances into account, what should we expect the last revelation granted to John in Patmos to contain ? Should we, judging by analogy, expect that, passing over in silence eighteen hundred years, crowded with events of deep interest, of stupendous importance to seventy or eighty generations of His

saints, the Lord Jesus would reveal, through this Christian Apostle, only the particulars of a brief closing crisis of earthly history, subsequent to the Church's removal, and relating mainly to a future Jewish remnant? Assuredly not! We should expect this final prophecy, sent directly by Christ Himself to His Church, through His most spiritually-minded apostle, to contain *an outline of all that should befall that Church, from the time then present, until the Lord's return, with perhaps brief indications of subsequent events.* A first perusal of the prophetic part of the book gives the impression that our expectation is correct. We find a series of symbolic visions, and we observe a perceptible correspondence between some of them, and some of Daniel's, exactly as would be the case supposing these visions to traverse the same ground as his *later* ones. We find in the Apocalypse no Beasts answering to Daniel's first three, but the fourth reappears very prominently with his ten horns; we find no periods corresponding to the seventy weeks or the 2300 days, but the "time, times, and a half" is repeated in several forms, and in the same relative connection. We find, in the closing visions, features that identify them with the final scenes of Daniel, and it is difficult to resist the conviction, that the intervening apocalyptic visions must be *symbolic predictions of the moral and spiritual aspects of all that has happened to the Church of Christ, from John's day to the present time, and of all that shall happen, to the close.*

But analogy furnishes a stronger argument still. Under the old covenant, prophecy threw its light beforehand, on almost every event of importance that happened to the nation of Israel, from the days of Abraham to the days of Christ, the fall of Jerusalem and its temple, the dispersion of the Jews, and the end of that age. New

Testament prophecy may therefore be expected to throw its light, on every event of importance to happen to the Church of Christ, from the fall of Jerusalem to the second Advent, that is, from the end of the Jewish, to the end of the Christian age.

Among the events made subjects of prophecy in the Old Testament were the birth of Isaac, the rapid increase of Israel, the descent into Egypt, the sufferings of the Israelites under the Pharaohs, the duration of their bondage, the Exodus, the forty years in the desert, the possession of Canaan, its very division among the tribes; the characters of Saul, David, Solomon, and many other individuals; the building of the temple, the division of the kingdom into two, the Assyrian invasion and Israel's captivity; the Babylonian invasion and the seventy years' captivity of Judah, the return from Babylon, the time to elapse, and many of the events to occur, between it and the Coming of Messiah the Prince; His birth, character, true nature, ministry, sufferings, and death; the ministry of John the Baptist, the rejection of Israel, the call of the Gentiles, and the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus.

Was *Israel* ever left during a long period, full of momentous changes, and events of solemn national importance, without the light and guidance of prophecy? Is there in *their* history any "mighty unrepresented vacuum," of the occurrences of which we can say, great as are these events in human estimation, they are deemed unworthy of Divine notice in prophecy? If such be the case there will be a distinct analogy, on which to base the theory, that the Apocalypse is still wholly unfulfilled. But such is not the case. The chain is almost unbroken, and though four hundred years elapsed between the last of the prophets and the coming of Messiah, Daniel's prophecy fills in the events of the

interval, so that no gap of even a century occurs in the long series.

Is it likely that there should be no analogy, but a perfect contrast, in the history of the spiritual Israel? Has she no Egypt to leave and no wilderness to traverse, no land to inherit, no oppressors to tyrannize over her, no evil kings to mislead her, no reformers and deliverers to arise, no *Babylon* to carry her captive, no temple to rebuild, no Messiah to look for, no judgments to apprehend, no rest to inherit? Are *hers* less important than theirs? Are her foes so much more obvious, her dangers so much more patent, that it should be superfluous to supply her with prophetic light to detect them? Because *they* were an earthly people, and *she* a heavenly Church, is she therefore not on earth, and not amid the ungodly? Are her enemies heavenly because the Church is so? Nay, but most earthly, for the wicked spirits against whom the Church wrestles, wage their warfare incarnate in earthly, sensual, *devilish* systems, and in actual men, as did Satan in the serpent in Eden. Every conceivable reason would suggest her *greater* need of prophetic light. Now the Apocalypse is the book of the New Testament which answers to "the prophets" of the Old. If then it contain predictions of the first spread of Christianity, of the hosts of martyrs who sealed their testimony with their blood, during the ten pagan persecutions, of the reception of Christianity by Constantine and the Roman Empire, of the gradual growth of corruption in the Church, of the irruptions of the Goths and Vandals, and the break up of the old Roman empire into ten kingdoms, of the rise and development of Popery, of the rise and rapid conquests of Mohammedanism, of the long continued and tremendous sufferings of the Church under Papal persecutions, of

the fifty millions of martyrs slain by the Romish Church, of the enormous political power attained by the Popes, of their Satanic craft and wickedness, of the Reformation, of the gradual decay of the Papal system and the extinction of the temporal power of the Popes: *if it contain predictions of these events, which we know to have taken place in the history of the spiritual Israel*, then we have a *perfect analogy* with the Old Testament. If, on the other hand, the Apocalypse alludes to none of these events, but, passing them all over in silence, gives only the history of an Antichrist who has not yet appeared, and of judgments not yet commenced, nor to be commenced until the Church is in heaven, then instead of a striking scriptural analogy, we have a glaring and most unaccountable contrast.

We say advisedly *unaccountable*, for none of the reasons assigned for this supposed contrast between Israel's experience and our own in this matter, are satisfactory. Their calling was an earthly one, ours is a heavenly one, it is true; nevertheless our calling from heaven, and to heaven, leaves us still on earth. We have earthly connections and relations; we are not of the world, but we are in the world. The acts of earthly monarchs, and the changes of kingdoms and dynasties, affect the Church even as they affected her Lord, in the days of His flesh. How came the prophecies, "I called my Son out of Egypt," and "He shall be called a Nazarene," to be accomplished? What took the virgin mother to Bethlehem? Why was Paul left bound two whole years? Secular political events have their influence, their mighty influence, on the Church, notwithstanding her heavenly calling, and may therefore well be revealed to her by the spirit of prophecy. It is evident there is nothing in the peculiarity of this dis-

pensation, which precludes the Church from receiving predictions of specific events to take place during its course, because *the Epistles contain such predictions*. The fact that the Holy Ghost has announced to the Church events reaching through the whole dispensation cannot be denied. "He who now letteth will let until he be taken out of the way; and then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming." The hindering obstacle, whatever it was, was in existence when the apostle wrote, and was to continue in existence until another event took place, the rise of the Man of Sin, and that wicked one was to continue till the Lord's Coming. Here we have a prophecy, the fulfilment of which, starting from its own date, reaches to the consummation, and covers the whole interval, leaving no room for a break.

There is therefore no ground for asserting, that the fulfilment of the Apocalypse must be future, because the Church cannot be the subject of prophecies whose sphere is earth. If she may be the subject of one or two, she may equally well be the subject of a hundred, and the question must be decided on other grounds. If the first generation of Christians were forewarned of the fall of Jerusalem, we may be forewarned of the fall of Babylon. If they knew beforehand that Jerusalem was to be compassed about with armies, we may know that the power of Turkey is to decay. In principle there is no difference; a dispensation that admits of the one, admits also of the other.

The interpretation of this book which asserts a past historic fulfilment of the greater part of its mystic visions, is then in perfect harmony with strong scriptural analogies; and the interpretation which asserts them all

to be future and unfulfilled, is in violent and unnatural opposition to all analogy, and would require the strongest internal evidence to support it. But such internal evidence it can never receive, seeing it is a negative, and not a positive theory; it denies the historic fulfilment, but substitutes no other that can be tested by its correspondence or otherwise with the terms of the prediction. Internal evidence in its favour is therefore impossible; there is no analogy to support it; and we are driven to the conclusion that it is untenable.

The principal test, however, by which to determine the period covered by this prophecy, is a comparison with history. Can any series of events be indicated, since the Christian era, which bear a sufficiently clear resemblance to the symbolic visions of the Apocalypse, to justify the assertion, that the prophecy is for the most part a fulfilled one.

We firmly believe that such a fulfilment is clearly traceable. Yet as Jewish unbelief refuses to perceive that the character and mission, the life and death, of Jesus of Nazareth, fulfil the long series of Messianic predictions, so there may be a Christian unbelief, which refuses to perceive that the events of the Christian era answer to the predictions of this Christian prophecy.

Yet if such a series of events have taken place, it ought not to be difficult to observe the resemblance between the history and the prophecy. It is not a question of minor details, but of great events, reaching through centuries of time. It is not a question of remote antiquity, nor of half explored, dimly known regions. The things that have transpired in the Roman earth, since the Apocalypse was written, especially those concerning the Christian Church, are not things done in a corner. We have records abundant and varied enough

of the whole period: and we have remains, and monuments, and present facts, which are so linked with all that eventful past, that no ingenuity can distort or deny any of its main features. This being the case, it must be not only possible, but easy, to recognize the fulfilment of the apocalyptic prophecies if it exist, provided only we are sufficiently acquainted with the facts of history, and rightly understand the predictions themselves.

The reason that the resemblance is not more uniformly perceived, between the predictions of Revelation and the facts of history since the Christian era, must lie, either in a want of thorough acquaintance with one or other, or else in a want of careful and unprejudiced attention to the correspondence between them.

Besides this, the assumption that the book of Revelation is unfulfilled prevents many from perceiving the proofs to the contrary. But we feel no hesitation in asserting, that a candid student, who admits the Apocalypse to be symbolic, and patiently endeavours by the help of other Scripture to translate its symbols, and who then proceeds to compare its predictions with the historical records of the Christian era, will be driven to admit that there is as clear a correspondence between the two, as between any other prophecy and its fulfilment.

This correspondence will be traced somewhat fully as to one or two of the visions, in the third part of this work; and any force of truth therein perceived, must be allowed to lend its aid in deciding our present point, the general principles on which the book ought to be interpreted. We ask the Futurist reader to remember, that it is possible for the plainest and most satisfactory fulfilment of a prophecy to be forced on the attention, and yet be unperceived: witness the Jews in the days of Christ; witness the disciples by the empty sepulchre.

And yet if a fulfilment of the Apocalypse has been accomplishing for more than seventeen hundred years, and if there remains very little now to be fulfilled, *it is of momentous interest to the Church of Christ that she should be aware of the fact.*

A divine programme of the proceedings of this dispensation has been placed in our hands; they who avail themselves of it, and watch the dissolving views presented on the stage of history, know how many of the pre-appointed configurations have appeared, melted away, and been replaced by others; they know the position on the programme of the one now on the stage, and they know what remains! They lift up their heads; they know that their redemption draweth nigh.

Nor are the claims of this principle of historical interpretation in the least invalidated by the fact, that interpreters differ among themselves as to the precise application of some of the visions. Nearly all the writers of the first fifteen centuries of the Christian era entertained the view that the Apocalypse was a comprehensive prophecy, reaching from the date of its publication to the end of all things, and endeavoured consequently to find its historical solution. At the time of the Reformation, and subsequently, the great body of commentators still interpreted the Apocalypse on the same principle, but naturally with a far closer approximation to the truth, though they were by no means unanimous in their expositions of detail; and many are the points of controversy which still exist. But the essential agreement more than counterbalances the minor differences,¹ and it would be strange indeed if such differences did *not* exist.

¹ We extract the following note from a pamphlet by P. H. Gosse, F.R.S., entitled, "The Revelation: How is it to be Interpreted?"

Prophetic interpretation is not milk for babes, but rather strong meat for those that are of full age, and have their senses exercised by reason of use. But which of the very simplest doctrines of Scripture excludes controversy? Is it an argument against the true view of the Atonement, that numerous erroneous and defective

"The following list of Presentist expositors of the Apocalypse includes, so far as I have been able to ascertain, all of any note from the era of the Reformation to the publication of the 'Horæ' of Mr. Elliott: Luther, Bullinger, Bale, Chytræus, Marlorat, Foxe, Brightman, Pareus, Mede, Vitringa, Daubuz, Sir Isaac Newton, Whiston, Bengel, Bishop Newton, Bicheno, Faber, Frere, Irving, Cunningham, Habershon, Bickersteth, Birks, Woodhouse, Keith, Elliott, twenty-six in all. Out of these there are agreed as follows:

1. That seals I. to IV. are the decline of the pagan empire .	10
2. That seal VI. is the fall of paganism under Constantine .	11
3. That trumpets I. to IV. are the Gothic invasions .	15
4. That trumpet V. is the Saracens	17
5. That trumpet VI. is the Turks	21
6. That the little opened book refers to the Reformation .	12
7. That chapter xi. is the papal persecution of saints as heretics	22
8. That chapter xii. is the depression and recession from view of the true Church during the papal ages .	18
9. That the beasts are aspects of the Papacy	25
10. That the vials are the great French Revolution and its results	8
11. That chapter xvii. is Rome	26
12. That chapter xviii. is the Papacy	26
13. That a day is the symbol of a year	19

It is right to observe, that the first four seals and first four trumpets referring each to several things, the agreement must be understood as admitting some diversity in details. Also that the application to the French Revolution of the vials could not possibly be made by expositors who wrote before the close of the last century, that is, more than half of the whole number. Sir Isaac Newton and Whiston, however, shrewdly foresaw the great infidel revolution, as the earthquake of the seventh trumpet, 'that infidelity was to break in pieces the antichristian party which had so long corrupted Christianity.'"

views exist? If we cannot see eye to eye on such subjects as these, shall we marvel that differences appear in the application of the symbolic visions of Revelation to history? The multitude of the events predicted, their range and variety, the peculiar language in which they are foretold, the fact that they bear a strong testimony against existing corruptions in the Church, and consequently excite the antagonism of all who uphold these corruptions,—these things are quite sufficient to account for the measure of disagreement which is found among interpreters.

But it is needful to notice an objection commonly advanced by Futurist interpreters, who hold the parenthetical character of the present dispensation; because it appears to have more weight than on examination it proves to possess.

It is a sort of attempt to prove an *alibi* on behalf of the Church: "the Church cannot be in any way the subject of the prophetic visions of Revelation (chap. vi.—xix.) because she is already seen in heaven in the two previous chapters. All that happens after chapter v. is subsequent to the rapture of the Church; it must therefore refer to the Jewish remnant." "The Church is never seen on earth, or anywhere but in heaven, from the end of chapter iii. till in chapter xix. Christ comes forth from heaven, and the armies which were in heaven follow in His train."

It would be a sufficient answer to this objection to say, that part of the Church is seen in heaven, while part is still represented as suffering on earth; or to say, "He hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ": even now, while we still groan, and fight, and toil, and die, on earth. The Church was in heaven, *in the only sense in which*

she will be there till the Marriage of the Lamb shall come, when John was in Patmos. In other words, the Apocalypse represents the Church as mystically in heaven, while still actually on earth, even as Ephesians ii., Philippians iii., and other Scriptures do.

So, while we gladly grant to our Futurist brethren, that a portion of the Church is represented as in heaven, in chapters iv., v., we ask them to grant with equal candour that a portion is represented on earth in the subsequent chapters.

The prophecy is addressed to *Christ's servants* and to the *Churches*; the ascription of praise in chapter i. 5 is evidently *Christian* praise; it is the praise of those who have been loved by Jesus, and washed from their sins in His blood. John speaks of himself as the brother, and fellow-sufferer of those to whom he wrote, and John was a *Christian* confessor, a prisoner of Jesus Christ in Patmos, as much as Paul had been in Rome. He says he was in exile "for the Word of God, and for the testimony which he held," which expression therefore means *Christianity*. Under the fifth seal we catch a glimpse of a company of martyrs who were slain "for the Word of God and for the testimony which they held," that is, for confessing their *Christian faith*, like John; they were slain because they were Christians. White robes are given to them, and they are told to wait till another company of martyrs should be killed *as they were*, that is, *as Christians*. In chapter vii. we have presented to us a company in heaven, unquestionably *Christians* also, for they are gathered out of every nation, kindred, and tongue, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. In chapter viii. "the prayers of all saints" and "the prayers of the saints" are mentioned; now prayer

ascends from suppliants on earth, and "saints" in New Testament phraseology means *Christians*. We have no right in the last book of the New Testament to revert to an Old Testament signification of this word. Where does John ever apply such a term to *Jews*? Where in the whole New Testament can the term be found so applied? Why then should we assert that it is applied to Jews here? Paul uses it forty-three times, and in every case as a synonym for Christians. Luke uses it four times, in the Acts, and Jude twice in his Epistle, in the same sense; in fact only once is it used in any equivocal sense in the whole New Testament. ("Many bodies of the saints which slept arose." Matt. xxvii. 52.)

Besides, we observe these "saints," who are thirteen times mentioned in the Apocalypse, doing and bearing exactly what we know, from other Scriptures, the saints of the Christian Church must do and bear in this dispensation. We find them watching, waiting, praying, enduring tribulation (chap. xiii. 10), resisting unto blood (chap. xvi. 6), resting in heaven (chap. xiv. 12, 13), and at last manifested as the Bride of Christ, and as the "armies which were in heaven," clad under both emblems with the "fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of *saints*"; we find them associated with the martyrs of *Jesus* (chap. xvii. 6), a clear proof that they cannot be Jewish saints.

In short, so far from the Church being actually and exclusively in heaven at the commencement of the vision, *she is seen on earth during its entire course*. If the saints who form the Bride of the Lamb in chapter xix. are not the saints who in the previous chapters witnessed for Him in life and in death, then the lesson written most legibly on the pages of the prophecy,—if

we suffer, we shall also reign with Him,—is utterly obliterated.

The only way of avoiding the force of this argument is, to deny that the Bride of the Lamb is the Church; for it is evident that the Bride is identical with the saints, and it is evident also that the saints are on earth, during the whole course of the book. Those who are resolved to prove that the Church is *not* represented as on earth in these visions, must therefore not only deny that the saints *are* the Church, but seeing the saints are identical with the Bride, must also *deny that the Bride is the Church*.

It is a painful and humiliating illustration of the length to which the desire to uphold a theory will carry Christian men, that many Futurists are to be found, who actually *do* deny this, and even glory in their shame in so doing, as if this departure from one of the first principles of Christ, were an attainment of advanced truth!

The Bride of Christ a Jewish remnant!! It is then of the Jewish remnant that the Apostle Paul speaks in Ephesians v. ! It is of a Jewish remnant that Paul says, "I have espoused you as a chaste virgin to Christ!"¹

Even so. "The *bride* is not the figure of nearest association," say our accurate Futurist friends; "the *body* is still nearer." "The Church is His body, the fullness

¹ The future existence of a Jewish remnant is not denied, though their history and experiences are mapped out by a certain school of prophetic interpreters far more definitely than by the Word of God. That the remnant or remainder of the Jewish nation will be restored to Palestine before the Millennium, brought there into great trouble, and prepared by it to say, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord," that Christ will appear for their deliverance, and that they will be converted at the sight of Him, this much seems clear from Scripture. The gifts and calling of God are without repentance, and He has not cast away His people whom He foreknew.

of Him that filleth all in all." True! but have you not read, "he that loveth his *wife* loveth *himself*"?—in a sense the bride is the body, and the body is the bride. The figures are twain, the truth is one. Such is the union, that Christ and His Church are separate existences, as are bridegroom and bride; such also is the union, that Christ and His Church are one, as is the body with the head. It is making a distinction without a difference, to assert that the *bride* and the *body*, in Ephesians i. and v., do not represent the same reality.

Let it be granted then, that, fulfilling all these types from Eden downwards, and realizing all the figures of most intimate association and union which language can convey,—the vine and the branches, the head and the members, the bridegroom and the bride,—the white-robed saintly Bride of Revelation xix. is the Church of the redeemed; and we claim that without all contradiction, *the Church is on earth during the action of the Apocalypse, and that therefore the Apocalypse is a Christian Prophecy, fulfilled in the events of the Christian Era.*

PART III

FORETOLD AND FULFILLED

CHAPTER I

THE PROPHECIES OF "BABYLON," AND "THE BEAST."—REASONS FOR
THE EXAMINATION OF THESE TWO PROPHECIES.—FUNDAMENTAL ;
DIVINELY INTERPRETED ; PRACTICALLY IMPORTANT.—BABYLON
THE GREAT REPRESENTS THE APOSTATE CHURCH OF ROME.

THE scope of this work prevents our attempting to enter into a detailed examination of the symbols of the Apocalypse. The book itself, as we have seen, interprets some of them, and other parts of Scripture interpret others. It would not be difficult to form a tolerably complete dictionary of the meaning of the Apocalyptic symbols, by placing opposite each passages of Scripture in which the same symbol is employed, in contexts which indicate its meaning. To search the Scriptures is to find the solution of many a difficulty in this book, for it is closely related to the rest of the Bible.

We proceed, however, briefly to examine two of the leading prophecies of the Revelation, a clear understanding of which is of itself sufficient to determine its whole scope and character. They are two of the most important symbolizations in the entire series; they occupy several whole chapters, and are alluded to in others; they are closely related to each other, and one of them is *divinely interpreted*. This is the vision of *Babylon the Great*, in chapter xvii., a prophecy which by its connection with other predictions of the Apocalypse, furnishes a clue to the meaning and application of the

whole series of visions. This prophecy has besides a solemn practical importance.

Immediately prior to the fall of Babylon, described in chapter xviii., a voice from heaven cries, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, that ye receive not of her plagues; for her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." It is important that Christian people should be very clear as to the system thus solemnly denounced by a voice from heaven. And similarly, immediately after the fall of Babylon, "a great voice as of much people in heaven," is heard saying, with reference to it, "Alleluia; salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are His judgments: for He hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever." If this symbol represents an evil so gigantic that heaven itself is moved to psalms of praise on the occasion of its overthrow, should not the Church on earth be anxious to recognize it, and to avoid all connection with it?

The deep depravity attributed to "Babylon the Great," the peculiarly solemn adjuration to God's people to come out of her, and the utter and awful destruction denounced against her—all combine to attach great practical importance to the inquiry *what system is intended by this symbol?*

"Babylon the Great" represents a system which should last long, exert a subtle and extensive influence, and be guilty of exceeding iniquity and cruelty. It must *still be in existence*, seeing its destruction takes place simultaneously with "the Marriage of the Lamb," an event which we know to be still future; and seeing also that up to the moment of its destruction, or very

nearly so, children of God will be found more or less closely connected with it, so that a need will exist for the urgent call, "*Come out of her, my people.*"

This system is prefigured as a cruelly persecuting one, as one that would "shed the blood of saints, and martyrs of Jesus," one on whom the Lord God would "avenge the blood of His servants." The Lord Jesus Christ, who loves His Church, foreseeing the existence and career of this terrible system, forewarned, and thus forearmed her, by this prophecy. He furnishes her with abundant marks whereby the foe may be recognized, and solemnly warns her against making any truce or compromise, while He stimulates and encourages her for the long and bitter conflict by a view of the final result. He would have His people in no perplexity or doubt on so momentous a question, so He has made this prediction peculiarly clear; has placed it in marked and intentional *contrast* with another prophecy, which makes its meaning still clearer; and He has added *an explanation* which leaves no room for the candid student to err.

Let the reader note the contrasted features of the two symbolic prefigurations.

"THE WHORE THAT SITTETH
UPON MANY WATERS."

"BABYLON THE GREAT."

"There came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying, Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of *the great whore* that sitteth upon many waters.

"THE BRIDE, THE LAMB'S
WIFE."

"THE HOLY JERUSALEM."

"There came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee *the bride*, the Lamb's wife.

"So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

"And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication. And upon her forehead was a name written, *Mystery, BABYLON THE GREAT*, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.

"And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (Rev. xvii. 1-6).

"And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me" (the Bride, the Lamb's wife, under another symbol) (Rev. xxi.).

"To her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints" (Rev. xix. 8).

This Bride is described as "*THE HOLY JERUSALEM*, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light like unto a stone most precious" (Rev. xxi.).

"The dragon was wrath with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev. xii. 17).

As to Babylon, John adds, "when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration. And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? *I will tell thee*

the mystery of the woman. . . . The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. The waters are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. . . . And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth."

These prophecies present two broadly contrasted *women*, identified with two broadly contrasted *cities*, one reality being in each case doubly represented, as *a woman* and as *a city*; the harlot and Babylon are one; the Bride and the heavenly Jerusalem are one.

It is evident that the true interpretation of either of these double prefigurations must afford a clue to the true interpretation of the other.

The two women are contrasted in every particular that is mentioned about them. The one is pure as purity itself: the other, foul as corruption could make her. The one belongs to the Lamb, as His Bride: the other is associated with the kings of the earth. The one is clothed with fine linen, robed in Divine righteousness: the other is attired in the scarlet and gold of earthly splendour. The one is represented as a chaste virgin, espoused to Christ: the other is the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. The one is persecuted: the other is drunken with martyr blood. The one goes in with the Lamb to the Marriage Supper: the other is punished and destroyed. We lose sight of the Bride amid the effulgence of heavenly glory, and of the harlot amid the darkness of the smoke that "rose up for ever and ever."

It is impossible to find in Scripture a contrast more marked; and the conclusion is irresistible that whatever the one may represent, the other must prefigure *its opposite*. They are not two disconnected visions, but a pair—a pair associated, not by likeness, but by contrast

Now Scripture leaves us in no doubt as to the signification of the emblematic Bride, the Lamb's wife, the heavenly Jerusalem. Here, in prophetic vision, we see the complete and perfectly sanctified Church, clad in spotless robes of righteousness, brought to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. We see her *persecuted* like her Lord, and like her Lord and with her Lord, *glorified*. Beyond all question, the New Jerusalem Bride represents *the true Church of Christ*.

What then must the contrasted symbol, the Babylonian harlot, represent? *Surely some false and apostate Church*, some Church which, while professing to belong to Christ, is in reality given up to fellowship with the world, and linked in closest union with the kings of the earth; a worldly Church, which has left her first love, forgotten her heavenly calling, and proved faithless to her Lord.

Be it observed that these symbols, a woman and a city, prefigure definite systems, corporate bodies, not merely a multitude of similar but disconnected individuals. The tares of a wheat-field, the bad fish in the net, may represent such; but here we have neither true Christians nor worldly professors, as *individuals*, but two corporations, two definite bodies. The true Church of Christ is a body; its members are united in the closest union to their Head and to each other. The link that unites them is, however, a *spiritual* one; the body is consequently invisible *as such*. A false Church can have no such spiritual link. The bond that unites *it* must therefore be carnal, outward, visible; the Church represented by Babylon must be *a visible Church*, an earthly corporation, and as such capable of being discerned and recognized. Nor can the symbol comprise all false and faithless Churches; to the harlot

is expressly assigned a local connection—the woman and the city are one—if we can discover the name of the city, we shall be able to identify the Church intended.

The last words of the angel to John seem to leave no possibility of mistake as to the city. “The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth . . . and the woman which thou sawest is *that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth.*” What city was that? There was but *one* great city which in John’s day *reigned over the kings of the earth.* It was *Rome*; and Rome is the *only* city which *was* great then, *has been* great, in one way or other, ever since, and *is* so still. And Rome was seated on seven hills, “the seven mountains on which the woman sitteth.” Her common name with the classic writers of St. John’s age, is “the seven-hilled city”; an annual festival used to be held in honour of the “seven hilled city”; every Latin poet of note during a period of five hundred years alludes to Rome’s seven hills; their names were the Palatine, the Quirinal, the Aventine, the Cælian, the Viminal, the Esquiline, and the Janiculum hills. The medals and coins of the day *represent Rome* as a woman sitting on seven hills; and her titles show with sufficient clearness how thoroughly she *reigned.* She was styled “the royal Rome”; “the mistress of the world”; “the queen of nations.” Her sway was all but universal. She was the metropolis of that fourth great empire which Daniel had foretold would break in pieces and subdue all things, “dreadful and terrible and strong exceedingly”; and at the time of the apocalyptic visions her power was at its height. Rome, and no other city can be intended here; the woman is in some way identified with *Rome.* We previously saw that she must represent a Church; now we know what Church. The harlot is

the *Church of Rome*; there seems no escape from this conclusion. And it is a singular and notable fact, that no other city but Rome has ever given its name to a Church which has embraced many kindreds and nations. Many *countries* have done so, and even individuals; but as far as we are aware, no other *city*. We have the Greek Church, the Armenian and the Coptic Churches, the Lutheran Church, the Protestant Churches of various countries, the English Church, the Scotch Church; but the Papal system is styled, not so much the Latin Church, as the *Church of Rome*. "The woman which thou sawest is that great *city*" (not empire or country) "which reigneth over the kings of the earth."

The question, however, naturally suggests itself, If the woman be identified in some way with *Rome*, why is her brow emblazoned with the name of *Babylon*? The answer is evident; the Apocalypse is a book of symbols; things are represented by signs; realities are veiled; and it would have been altogether inconsistent with the whole style of this prophecy to have written *Rome*, on the harlot's brow. The woman is a figure of a Church, a corrupt idolatrous Church, that is, the *symbol* seen by John was suggestive of something widely different from itself; so the name, with which that symbol was stamped, was also suggestive of something widely different from itself, though mysteriously similar. The harlot is "Mystery, Babylon the Great." That the *literal* Babylon was not intended, is perfectly clear, since that city was neither built on seven hills, nor reigning over the kings of the earth, in John's day. But that the literal Babylon was a most appropriate symbol for Rome is equally evident. Both had been employed by God as scourges for the guilty city of Jerusalem and people of Israel; and to each in its turn the sacred vessels of the

Temple had been carried as spoil; Belshazzar abused them at his banquet, and Titus engraved them on his arch.

Even had the plan of the Apocalypse not demanded it, circumstances would have rendered it needful for St. John to use a mysterious designation, in speaking as he here does of Rome. It would not have been safe, in the days of Nero and Domitian, to expose the corruption and predict the downfall and utter overthrow of their capital. Persecution was already bitter enough, as St. John was experiencing in Patmos; and *reserve* on such a subject was evidently needful. But in spite of reserve and mystery, the true meaning of this symbolic name "Babylon," was early perceived by the Christians, and divined even by their enemies. Irenæus, who was a disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of John himself, says that "Babylon" in the Apocalypse signifies Rome; and Tertullian says, "Babylon is a figure of the Roman city, mighty, proud of its sway, and fiercely persecuting the saints." So Jerome and others, in unbroken sequence, to the present day. When accused by their heathen Roman adversaries of cherishing predictions of the downfall of Rome, the early Christians *never denied the charge*, but merely replied, that they were far from *desiring* that downfall, since, little as *Rome* favoured Christianity, the *Antichrist* whom they expected immediately to succeed would do so still less.

Babylon, then, in this prophecy means *Rome*; even Roman Catholic writers are constrained to admit this. Bellarmine and Bossuet do not attempt to deny that these predictions concern Rome. They admit it freely, but assert that they refer to Rome *as a heathen city merely*, and not as a Christian Church; and they maintain that the prophecy of the fall of Babylon was fulfilled in the destruction of Rome, by the Goths, in the

fifth century. "Babylon," say they, is *Rome Pagan*, not *Rome Papal*; and they defend this position with considerable skill, and some show of reason. This interpretation originated with Bossuet in the 16th century; till that time it had never been supposed by any expositor that the fall of Rome under Alaric exhausted the prediction about the fall of Babylon. But as soon as the Protestant application of this prophecy to the *Church* of Rome was felt to be a tremendous weapon against that Church, its advocates were driven in self-defence to find some interpretation which should turn its edge.

It must not be supposed, however, that the interpretation now called *Protestant* originated out of the party feeling and antagonism produced by the Reformation. On the contrary, the view that Babylon meant the Church of Rome was held long before the Reformation, and may be said, to some extent, to have produced it. As soon as the Church of Rome began to put forth her unscriptural claims, and to teach authoritatively her unscriptural doctrines, so soon did the faithful begin to recognize her as the predicted Babylon of the Apocalypse. The earliest Fathers of the Church, who lived while Rome was pagan, could not, of course, hold such a view. Little did *they* dream that Rome, the persecuting pagan city, would ever become the seat and centre of a Christian Church. Nor could this application of the prophecy arise, while Rome remained a faithful and pure Christian Church; but at the close of the 6th century, Pope Gregory I. made a strong protest against the assumption of the title of "*universal bishop*." He went so far as to assert that "the first bishop who should assume it would thereby deserve the name of Antichrist." From that time to the present day, the testimony that the Church of Rome is Babylon has

never been dropped; and though, through all the Middle Ages, this view was held at great risk and peril, we can trace an unbroken succession of witnesses, each one bolder and more decided than the last, up to the time when Luther and the Reformers sounded aloud over Europe the trumpet-call, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

The argument, therefore, that the Protestant interpretation is a modern innovation, unknown to the first Fathers of the Christian Church, is valueless. We must now briefly examine the considerations which prove it to be the true view.

And first, seeing the rise, pretensions, persecutions, domination, and decay, of the Papal Church, have been beyond all controversy *the greatest and most important facts in Church history*, is it not incredible that the prophecy, intended to guide and sustain the Church all through its course, should not allude to these facts, or even glance at the existence of this Church? And yet, if Babylon be *not* the Papal Church, we must agree with Bossuet that that Church is *not so much as mentioned* in the whole Apocalypse.

And wherefore should so elaborate a prophecy have been given about the character and doom of Rome Pagan, which was sacked by Alaric, A.D. 410? Was it for a brief period of about 300 years only that the Apocalypse was to afford guidance, support, and instruction to the Church? Even admitting this improbability,—what were the few, who in this case were alone to benefit by the prophecy, to learn from it? To shun heathen idolatry? It did not need the Apocalypse to teach them that. Surely the martyrs, who died in multitudes before this last prophecy was given to the

Church, had learned that lesson without its aid! The early Christians were in no danger of relapsing into *heathen* idolatry; but a *Christian idolatry* was to arise; Antichrist was to sit on the throne of Christ, in God's temple; a fearful apostasy was to take place in the Church itself; it was an object well worthy of Divine inspiration, to indicate *this new and specious form of evil*, which, rising slowly and imperceptibly, was destined to attain such gigantic proportions, and to endure for more than a thousand years.

But there are statements in the prophecy itself, which entirely preclude its application to Pagan Rome and its destruction. This harlot city, Babylon, rules and rides upon the Roman beast in its *ten-horned state*. Now the ten-crowned horns, or ten kingdoms, of the Roman empire did not make their appearance until *after* the barbarian eruptions, and the sack of Rome by Alaric. Rome Papal, on the other hand, rose into power simultaneously with these ten kingdoms, which "gave their power and strength" to her. Rome Papal ruled rulers, who *voluntarily* submitted to her authority, as is here predicted. Rome Pagan never did any such thing; she put down all kings, and ruled over them *against their will*. When did ten kingdoms agree to *give* their power to Imperial Rome? Never! To Pagan Rome? *Throughout the dark ages!* By her alluring devices, she obtained their *willing* subjection, and she still *claims* it as her due. To every Pontiff who assumes the tiara she says, "Know thyself to be the father of kings and princes, the ruler of the world."

The prophecy further represents that the harlot shall ultimately be destroyed by the ten kingdoms which had previously supported her. The destruction of Rome Pagan was not by old friends, but by new enemies, who

had never been in subjection to it, and it cannot therefore be regarded as a fulfilment of this prophecy.

A further proof is found in the condition to which Babylon, as represented here, is reduced by her overthrow. She becomes "the habitation of devils, the hold of every foul spirit, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird." Now if the fall of Babylon be the sack of Rome by Alaric, this *subsequent* condition must denote the state of *Rome Christian*, a portrait Roman Catholics will hardly care to appropriate. It is added, that Babylon is to be burnt with fire and become utterly desolate, and that she is to be plunged like a great millstone into the sea. But neither of these prophecies was fulfilled in the Gothic destruction of Rome, and they must therefore be still unfulfilled; in other words, their fulfilment must occur in connection with *Rome Papal*, and not with Rome Pagan.

St. John saw this Babylonian harlot in a state of intoxication, "drunken with the blood of the saints, and of the martyrs of Jesus"; at which he says he "wondered with great admiration." This is a proof that *he* did not conceive the symbol to prefigure *heathen* Rome. It could have caused him no astonishment that the *heathen city* should persecute Christianity. He was painfully familiar with that characteristic of the Roman Empire, having seen thousands of his fellow-Christians martyred, and been all but a martyr himself. But that Rome should not only become a Christian Church, but, *being such*, should be also a bitterer persecutor of Christians than ever heathen Rome had been, *this* was indeed astonishing, and John might well wonder!

That the Church of Rome deserves pre-eminently to be stigmatized as *drunk with the blood of saints* cannot be disputed. What other Church ever established an

Inquisition, instigated a St. Bartholomew, and gloried in her shame in having done so? What other Christian Church has slain *many millions* of Christians for *no crime but Christianity*, as she has done?

The Babylonian harlot is represented as enthroned upon many waters, which are nations and peoples. She is not only a Church, but *a Church ruling nations*; that is, she claims a temporal as well as a spiritual sway. She governs the Beast and his ten horns; and so unites a civil and a religious supremacy. Now this is one of the most striking characteristics of the Church of Rome, and of that Church only. Other Churches may be so united to the State, that the State assumes the unlawful right to govern *them*; but no other Church assumes the right to govern the State,—*all States*,—and to make all men her subjects. Rome did this, and does so still, even in her decrepitude and decay. She claims two swords, she holds two keys; she crowns her Pontiff with two crowns, the one a mitre of universal bishopric, the other a tiara of universal dominion. “There is indeed a mystery on the forehead of the Church of Rome, in the union of these *two supremacies*; and it has often proved *a mystery of iniquity*. It has made the holiest mysteries subservient to the worst passions; it has excited rebellion on the plea of religion; it has interdicted the last spiritual consolations to the dying, and Christian interment to the dead, for the sake of revenge, or from the lust of power. It has forbidden to marry, and yet has licensed the unholiest marriages. It has professed friendship for kings, and has invoked blessings on regicides and usurpers. It has transformed the anniversary of the institution of the Lord’s Supper into a season of malediction, and fulminated curses according to its will. Pius IX., in the year 1848,

addressed the people of Rome thus, "It is one of the many great blessings which God has lavished on Italy, that *our three millions of subjects should have two hundred millions of brother subjects of every language and nation.*" So that, to the present day, Rome, by her extravagant and guilty claims, does all in her power to identify herself with the harlot of the Apocalypse, who sits upon many waters, which are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

The title emblazoned on the brow of this mystic woman is not only "Babylon the Great"; but "the mother of harlots and *abominations* of the earth." This word "*abominations*" designates, as is well known, *idols*. The literal ancient Babylon was the mother of almost all the *literal* idolatries that the earth has ever known. The spiritual Babylon is here charged with being a source and fountain of spiritual idolatry; in other words, it is here predicted, that the Church of Rome would be an *idolatrous Church*.

It needs but to recall a few of the world-wide and long-enduring customs of that Church, to prove how strikingly this prediction has been fulfilled. Rome enjoins the worship of a bread-god—the wafer, or sacrament; and anathematizes all who refuse to render it. The Council of Trent plainly declares the doctrine of transubstantiation, that the bread and wine in the sacrament are "changed into our Lord Jesus Christ, true God and true man," and adds, "there is therefore now no room to doubt, that all the faithful in Christ are bound to venerate this holy sacrament, and to render thereto the worship of *latria*, which is due to the true God. . . . If any one shall say, that this holy sacrament should not be adored, nor carried about in processions, nor held up publicly to the people, to adore it, or that

its worshippers are idolaters, *let him be accursed.*" This worship is rendered to "the Host" by Roman Catholics, not only when it is elevated at the time of the sacrament, but whenever it is carried in procession in the streets. All persons are by the sound of a bell admonished to worship the passing God, and accursed if they refuse. On all the millions of her members in every land, Rome enjoins as a solemn and indispensable duty the adoration of a bit of bread which a man may eat or a mouse may nibble.

Millions of martyrs have perished for protesting against this idolatry, and asserting that it is blasphemy to say that man can first make God, and then eat Him; a creed more degrading than any that the heathen hold. In the days when the "Corpus Christi" procession was a most imposing and dazzling ceremony, when friars, and monks, and priests, and prebends, and canons, and bishops, and archbishops, in varied and splendid costumes attended the bread-god through the streets of crowded cities, amid the clang of bells, bands of military music, choral hymns, and clouds of incense, it was no easy matter for a heretic to escape detection. From the moment the Host came in sight, until it had passed right out of the range of vision, the multitudes were commanded to bow in profound adoration and awe! And woe to the man who dared to do otherwise; the Inquisition speedily became his home, and the *auto da fé* his portion.

Nor is this the worst form of Rome's idolatry: her mariolatry—her worship of the Virgin, is worse. We hesitate to record the profane blasphemies found in the writings of the Popes, prelates, and divines of Rome on this subject. Entire litanies of supplication are addressed to the Virgin; attributes which are the glory of God

alone are ascribed to her; the most extravagant and fantastic devotions are offered at her shrines; the whole of the hundred and fifty Psalms of David have been *altered*, so as to substitute for the Great Jehovah the Virgin Mary, as an object of prayer and praise and holy trust: "Into thy hands I commend my spirit, O Lady, in thee have I reposed my hope! Blessed is the man that loveth thy name, O holy Virgin, thy grace shall strengthen his soul. In thee, O Lady, have I hoped, I shall never be put to shame." This "Psalter of Bonaventura, Cardinal Bishop of Albano," has never been disowned or prohibited by the Church of Rome.

How completely the human mother has taken the place of her Divine Son, in the minds of Roman Catholics, may be gathered from a favourite story recorded by St. Francis. A monk had a vision; he saw two ladders: one red, at the summit of which was Jesus Christ; and the other white, at the top of which presided His blessed mother. He observed that many who endeavoured to ascend the first ladder, after mounting a few steps, fell down; and on trying again, were equally unsuccessful, so that they never attained the summit; but a voice having told them to make trial of the white ladder, they soon gained the top, the blessed Virgin having held forth her hands to help them! False doctrines, such as the fabulous "Assumption of the Virgin," and the unscriptural "Immaculate Conception," are freely invented by the Church of Rome, to justify this idolatrous adoration of a created being; the latter, promulgated in 1854, by the Pope in St. Peter's, in the presence of two hundred bishops, filled the Catholic Church with joy. The following passage is from an encyclical letter of Pius IX.:—

"But that our most merciful Lord may the more

readily lend an ear to our prayers, and grant our petitions, let us ever call upon the most holy Mother of God, the immaculate Virgin Mary, to intercede with Him; for she is the fond Mother of us all, our mediatrix, our advocate, our securest and greatest hope, than whose interposition with God, nothing can be stronger, nothing more influential!"

The "Te Deum" itself has been parodied, in honour of Mary; "We praise thee, O Mother of God! we acknowledge thee, O Virgin Mary! All the earth doth worship thee, the spouse of the everlasting Father! Holy, holy, holy, Mary, Mother and Virgin. The Church throughout all the world joins in calling on thee, the Mother of the Divine Majesty!" And the creeds have in like manner been parodied.

Nor is it the Virgin alone who is worshipped. Images of her—mere dolls—are also adored; witness the degrading ceremony of the annual "coronation of the Virgin," in which the Pope himself takes part; witness the worship of the "Madonna of the Augustinians" and other Madonnas. Mariolatry, among the ignorant masses, is pure image worship, idolatry in its most sensual and childish form, the adoration of a doll!

Space forbids more than a passing allusion to the other forms of idol worship, characterizing the Romish Church,—the worship of the "wooden cross," the worship of the "Bambino,"¹ the worship of the image of St. Peter, the worship of saints, the worship of relics, and similar profanities. When the subject is even superficially examined, the conviction that Rome Papal

¹ The Bambino is a wooden figure of the infant Christ, in the Church of Ara Coeli at Rome. It is credited with miraculous healing powers, and is (or was before 1870) carried in solemn procession to the bedside of the sick. Writing in 1842, Charles Dickens gives a first-hand account of its worship and its use, in his *Pictures from Italy*.

has exceeded Rome Pagan in the degradation of her idolatries, becomes irresistible; and the mind is overwhelmed with admiration of the wisdom and foreknowledge of the inspiring Spirit, who prefigured the Church of Rome, ages before it existed, as "the mother of abominations" or "idols."

To conclude—in the true and eloquent words of another¹—"The Holy Spirit, foreseeing, no doubt, that the Church of Rome would adulterate the truth by many gross and grievous abominations; that she would anathematize all who would not communicate with her, and denounce them as cut off from the body of Christ and the hope of everlasting salvation; foreseeing also that Rome would exercise a wide and dominant sway for many generations, by boldly iterated assertions of unity, antiquity, sanctity, and universality; foreseeing also that these pretensions would be supported by the civil sword of many secular governments, among which the Roman Empire would be divided at its dissolution, and that Rome would thus be enabled to display herself to the world in an august attitude of imperial power, and with the dazzling splendour of temporal felicity; foreseeing also that the Church of Rome would captivate the imaginations of men, by the fascinations of art allied with religion, and would ravish their senses, and rivet their admiration, by gaudy colours, and stately pomp, and prodigal magnificence; foreseeing also that she would beguile their credulity by miracles and mysteries, apparitions and dreams, trances and ecstasies, and would appeal to such evidence in support of her strange

¹ The late Bishop Christopher Wordsworth, in *Union with Rome: Is not the Church of Rome the Babylon of the Apocalypse?*—a pamphlet which was never answered, and may fairly be called unanswerable.

doctrines; foreseeing likewise that she would enslave men, and (much more) women, by practising on their affections, and by accommodating herself with dangerous pliancy to their weakness, relieving them from the burden of thought, and from the perplexity of doubt, by proffering them the aid of infallibility; soothing the sorrows of the mourner by dispensing pardon, and promising peace to the departed; removing the load of guilt from the oppressed conscience, by the ministries of the confessional, and by nicely poised compensations for sin; and that she would flourish for many centuries in proud and prosperous impunity, before her sins would reach to heaven, and come in remembrance before God; foreseeing also that many generations of men would thus be tempted to fall from the faith, and to become victims of deadly error; and that they who clung to the truth would be exposed to cozening flatteries, and fierce assaults, and savage tortures, from her; the Holy Spirit, we say, foreseeing all these things, in His Divine knowledge, and being the ever blessed Teacher, Guide, and Comforter of the Church, was graciously pleased to provide a heavenly antidote, for all these dangerous, wide-spread, and long-enduring evils, by dictating the Apocalypse. In this Divine book, the Spirit of God has portrayed the Church of Rome, such as none but He could have foreseen that she would become, and such as, wonderful and lamentable to say, she *has* become. He has thus broken her magic spells: He has taken the wand of enchantment from her hand; He has lifted the mask from her face, and with His Divine hand, He has written her true character in large letters, and has planted her title on her forehead, to be seen and read of all, "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth."

CHAPTER II

THE MAN OF SIN, OR ANTICHRIST

A GREAT FOURFOLD PROPHECY OF FUNDAMENTAL IMPORTANCE
(DAN. VII. 7-27 ; REV. XIII. 1-9 ; REV. XVII. ; 2 THESS. II.).

—THE ROMAN POWER.—ITS LAST FORM AS PREDICTED HERE,
THE SUCCESSION OF THE POPE OF ROME.—ORIGIN OF THIS
POWER.

INTIMATELY associated with the apocalyptic prophecy of Babylon the Great, which foretold, as we have seen, the existence, character, career, and doom, of the apostate Church of Rome, is another prophecy so closely related to it that the one cannot fairly be considered apart from the other.

The woman, who symbolizes the corrupt Church, is seen seated on a "scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns." As the angelic interpretation connects the woman with *Rome*, by the words: "the woman which thou sawest is that great city which ruleth over the kings of the earth," so it also connects this "beast" with *Rome*; for, interpreting its seven heads as seven successive forms of government, the angel says of them, "five are fallen, and *one is*." Under one of its seven forms, then, the power here intended *was the ruling power in the days when the Apocalypse was granted*. That power was, as we know, the Roman Empire; it was by the tyrant

Domitian that the Apostle John was exiled to Patmos, and it was under the Pagan persecutions of the Roman Emperors that the saints of that age were suffering martyrdom.

The past as well as the future history of this power is sketched by the angel. Five of its forms of government had, at that time, already passed away. The sixth was then in existence, a seventh was to follow and last a short time, and then should come *the eighth and last*; and it was on the Beast as governed by this eighth and last head that the woman was seen seated. Speaking of the "heads," or forms of government, the angel says, "Five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come, and when he cometh he must continue a short space; and the beast which thou sawest . . . *he is the eighth*, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition."

This scarlet-coloured beast is then a symbol of *the final form of the Roman power*, the last phase of that power whose entire course is represented by the fourth great beast of Daniel (Dan. vii.). A careful perusal of these prophecies leaves no room to doubt, that the *same* power is symbolized a third time in the "beast from the abyss," described in Revelation xiii. These Scriptures present a threefold prophetic history of one and the same power; and that power, beyond all question, is the great *Roman Empire*, the fourth universal monarchy from that of Babylon, the one which, both in Daniel's vision of the Four Beasts, and in Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the Image, is represented as continuing till the establishment of the everlasting kingdom of the God of heaven.

In common with the three preceding empires, this power is represented as *a beast*. Daniel, in the days of Belshazzar, long before the first Advent, saw it as a *one-headed* beast; John in the days of Domitian, when it

had already been more than eight centuries in existence, saw it as a *seven-headed* beast, fuller detail being naturally revealed to the later seer.

As a matter of fact, the great Roman power did actually exist under seven distinct and constantly recognized forms of government, enumerated by Livy, Tacitus, and historians in general, as such. Rome was ruled successively by kings, consuls, dictators, decemvirs, military tribunes, military emperors, and despotic emperors; the form of government being entirely dissimilar under these two last, though the name *emperor* was common to both.

This empire is represented as existing first in an undivided state, and secondly in a divided *tenfold* state. As a matter of history, it is notorious that the Roman power has done this. From its rise to the fourth century it was one and undivided; since its decline and fall as an empire, it has been broken up into many independent sovereignties, held together by a common submission to the Popes of Rome. The number of distinct kingdoms into which the Roman Empire in Europe has been divided has always been about ten, at times exactly ten, sinking at other times to eight or nine, and rising occasionally to twelve or thirteen, but averaging on the whole *ten*.¹ This is generally admitted, and indeed can-

¹ "It seems unnecessary," says Bishop Christopher Wordsworth, "to specify *ten* particular kingdoms into which the Roman Empire was divided; or even to demonstrate that it was divided into precisely *ten* kingdoms. The most ancient passage of Scripture in which the prophecy of the future division of the Roman Empire is found, is the vision of the image (Dan. ii. 42), where these kingdoms are represented by *the toes* of the image. Being toes they must be ten. Hence, when this dismemberment is described in other successive prophecies this denary number is retained: and thus the number *ten* connects all these prophecies together, and serves to show that they all point to the same object."

not be denied ; the fact lies on the surface of the history of Europe since the break-up of the Roman Empire, and serves as an important clue to the true scope and fulfilment of these predictions.

The point of supreme importance, in connection with this thrice-symbolized Roman Empire, is (to judge from the great prominence given to it by the inspiring Spirit), *its connection in its second stage with a peculiar and diabolical power of evil*, the rise, character, and actings of which are delineated with greater fullness than are those of the Empire itself. It is evident that the "little horn" of Dan. vii., and the "eighth head" of the beast in Rev. xiii. and xvii., represent *some important and mysterious power of evil*, distinct from, and yet connected with, the Roman Empire, in its second or divided stage. How important this power is in the Divine estimation, may be gathered from the fact, that more than ten times as much space is devoted to a description of *it*, than is occupied by the whole course and continuance of either of the first three universal monarchies. These are each dismissed in a single verse ; the Little Horn occupies ten or eleven, as if ten times more importance were attached to this strange power destined to arise in the second stage of the Roman dominion, than to any one of the vast and mighty empires of antiquity. Moreover, it is evidently the character and actings of this horn, or head, or power, that determine the doom of the beast.

Before we inquire *what this power is*, we must associate a fourth prophecy with these three, and consider very briefly St. Paul's prediction of the *Man of Sin*.

'Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let

no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a *falling away* first, and that *man of sin* be revealed, the *son of perdition*; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now *ye know* what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall *that Wicked* be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming: even him, whose coming is after *the working of Satan* with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie" (2 Thess. ii. 1-11).

In this passage, Paul,—in his endeavour to remove from the minds of the Thessalonians the erroneous expectation of the immediate Advent of Christ, which they were entertaining, and which they had perhaps derived from the expression in his previous Epistle, "we who are alive and remain,"—reminds them of something he had before *told* them, that certain events had to intervene, that an apostasy had to take place in the Church, whose incipient workings might already be detected. It was to issue in the development of a terrible power of evil, which he proceeds to describe, but which he tells them could not be fully manifested till a certain hindrance (and what that is, he adds, "*you know*") should be removed.

The very earliest traditions tell us that the hindrance here alluded to was *the Roman Empire* as then existing, and that Paul having previously by word of mouth made known that fact to the Church, avoided, from prudential reasons, more explicit reference to it in this

written communication. He did not wish to expose the persecuted Christians to fresh dangers, by putting into the hand of their enemies, proof of what would by them have been considered a seditious creed.

Tradition is often an unsafe guide; but in this case it seems peculiarly entitled to respect. The point was both an *important* and a *simple* one; those who received the information from the Apostle were not likely to forget it, and could scarcely err in repeating it; and from no other source than tradition *could* the Church of later ages learn a fact, *communicated by word of mouth only*, and *purposely* omitted from the inspired letter of the Apostle. We may therefore be thankful that the tradition as to what this hindrance was is of a very early date, is explicit, and agrees with what we learn from other Scriptures; as well as that there is no counter-tradition on the point. From Irenæus, the disciple of Polycarp, the contemporary of St. John, we first hear that the hindrance mentioned by Paul when he was with the Thessalonians, and alluded to in his second Epistle, was *the Roman Empire*; and from him downwards the Fathers are unanimous in this assertion.

There is the strongest presumption that they were right, for how should Irenæus and the Fathers *invent* such an improbable notion? They were far more likely to imagine the Roman Emperor to be Antichrist, than to imagine him to be the great obstacle to Antichrist's development! Its truth alone can account for the existence of this tradition at the date at which we first meet it.

The point is important, because his connection with *the Roman Empire* is one of the links in the chain of evidence, which proves that the "man of sin" and "son of perdition," here foretold, is identical with the power

described in the three prophecies we have just considered. He was to reign at *Rome*, else why would the then regnant power be a hindrance to his development? He was to succeed soon after the fall of the Roman Emperors, "*then* shall that wicked be revealed"; he was to emanate from Satan, "whose coming is after the working of Satan"; he was to wield an ecclesiastical power, though succeeding purely secular rulers, "the temple of God," or Christian Church, being the special *scene* of his ostentation; he was to be an opposer of Christ and His laws; and he was to be consumed like the "little horn," by the brightness of Christ's Coming. In all these respects, the power here foretold by Paul exactly resembles that predicted by Daniel and John, and as two such powers could not coexist, it must be the same power. Its rise, actings, character, and doom, are here foretold in plain words, while in the other prophecies, they are veiled in symbolic language.

In seeking the fulfilment of this fourfold prediction, we must therefore combine the features given in each separate prophecy, and, recognizing the principle of progressive revelation, we must modify the views derived from the earlier, by the later prophecies, and those derived from the later by the latest.

The particulars revealed about this great and peculiar power of evil, or "Man of Sin," are neither few nor vague. They comprise explicit information as to the time, place, and mode of his origin, and the attendant circumstances; they assign to him various and significant names; they describe his character and his actings toward God and toward man; his official position; his pride; his idolatries; his blasphemies; his lying wonders and false miracles; the extent of his dominion; his coadjutors; his persecutions of the saints of God; his

opposition to the Lamb of God; the duration of his prosperity and power; the causes of his decay and fall; his end, and his eternal portion. There is added a mysterious numerical mark, designed to secure his recognition by the wise. This is indeed the object for which this prophetic portrait is given to the Church, that she might recognize her great enemy when he should appear, be sustained in her sufferings under him, and be encouraged to resist him even to blood. It is not a portrait easily to be mistaken: the features are too terrible and too peculiar to belong to more than one incarnation of evil.

Interpreting, then, by the help of Scripture itself, the symbols under which realities are veiled, and blending in our minds the scattered intimations of this fourfold prophecy of the Man of Sin, we will endeavour to point out the power that in every respect answers to the portrait sketched by the pen of inspiration. That power, we are fully persuaded, and hope to be able to prove to the satisfaction of every unprejudiced reader, is the succession of the Roman Pontiffs, who for more than twelve centuries governed Papal Europe, who ranked as temporal sovereigns, and united under their sway the kingdoms of western Christendom.

As the Futurist school of interpreters hold a contrary view to this, and maintain that the fourfold prophecy in question refers to *a single individual*, and not to a succession of rulers, we must examine the symbols employed, and the statements made in these predictions, to see which view has most Scripture authority.

In Daniel's vision, the power in question is represented as a horn of the Roman beast—"a little horn." Now a *horn* in these symbolical prophecies signifies sometimes an individual king, and sometimes a dynasty

or race of rulers. In the "notable horn" of the he-goat, or Grecian Empire, universally admitted to have prefigured Alexander the Great, we have an instance of the use of the symbol in the former sense; and in the "four horns," which came up in the place of that notable horn, and represented the dynasties of the Ptolemies and the Seleucidæ, we have an instance of its use in the latter sense.

It is an exceedingly important inquiry, in *which* sense the symbol is used in the prophecy we are considering. Are the ten horns and their cotemporary the "little horn" *individual rulers*, or are they *races of rulers*? We turn to the angelic interpretation of the vision. "The ten horns are ten *kings* which shall arise, and another shall rise after them." If the word "king" here, *necessarily* signifies an individual monarch, the question is answered; the ten horns must be ten individual kings, and their cotemporary, the "little horn," must in that case be an individual also. If this be so, the Futurists are right; for since we know the "Man of Sin" is to be in existence at the Coming of Christ, it follows, that his career is *future*; since an individual can live only the ordinary life of mortals. In that case the event, which the Church of our day has to expect, is not the speedy Coming of Christ, but, as the Futurists assert, the very same that the Thessalonians of the first century were directed to look for, a prior advent and revelation of Antichrist.

It is therefore a momentous inquiry, which must not be lightly passed over, *Does the word "king," in common and in Scripture usage, necessarily mean an individual?* On the answer to this question, depends in great measure our judgment, as to whether the long-predicted Antichrist is a past and present power, or

whether we are still to look forward to his reign as a future event.

It is a maxim of the English Constitution that "the king cannot die." Does that maxim assert the immortality of an individual? or does it not rather assert the perpetuity of *the Royal Office*? "The king of England is a constitutional monarch," is a statement, which as much includes Queen Victoria as George III., though she was not a king at all, because it asserts what is characteristic of the whole line of English monarchs. If we read "the king of Prussia was at war with the emperor of France," we do not imagine that the two men were fighting a duel, but perceive that the word is used in a *representative* sense, the "king" including his kingdom, and the emperor representing his empire. In ordinary language, then, the word "king" may have a personal, an official, or a representative force; the context must in each case determine its signification. In treating of brief periods, and trivial events, the word is generally used in the *personal* sense; but in treating of long stretches of history, and great abstract principles, in the *official* or *representative* sense.

As far as ordinary usage can be a guide, the extended sense of the word is therefore most likely to be the true one in the passage under consideration, which treats of the succession of empires, and gives an outline of the world's history to the end of time.

But we are not left to this presumption; the prophecy itself *uses* the expression in the extended official sense, immediately before the sentence in question (Dan. vii. 17). "These great beasts, which are four, are four *kings* which shall arise out of the earth." Did this mean four individuals? Nay! but *four great empires*, each of which endured for centuries, under a succession of monarchs.

This proves that the ten horns and the little horn *may* be dynasties and not individuals; it does not prove that they *must*. It shows that Scripture uses the word in both senses, and many confirmatory instances of this official use of it, might be quoted. (Compare Jer. xxv. 9-12, xxvii. 6, 7.)

The great question is, How is it used in the symbolic prophecies of Daniel? A little investigation will show that *out of six instances in which it occurs, five require the extended official sense, and in the other, the two meanings of the word coincide*. The *probability*, therefore, is, that governments, and not individual men, are intended by the ten horns and the little horn.

A further argument for the same view is found in the fact that these prophecies are evidently *continuous*. There are no gaps between the parts of the image seen by Nebuchadnezzar; the ten toes (which are evidently identical with these ten horns) are joined on to the legs of iron. The interpretation links the history in the same way. Every subsequent stage follows immediately on the preceding one. There was no interval between the fall of Belshazzar and the rise of Darius the Mede. "In that night he took the kingdom." So in each case. How contrary then to all analogy to suppose an interval of over 1200 years, between the close of the undivided state of the Roman Empire, and the commencement of the divided state, which is presented as immediately succeeding! And this, when it is an undeniable and notorious *fact*, that a tenfold division *did* take place immediately after the dissolution of the old Roman Empire, and has continued more or less definitely from that day to this!

Prophecy foretells that the Roman Empire, when it ceased to exist as one kingdom, should begin to exist as

ten; history tells us that it *did* so; and as we adoringly admire this correspondence, between the prediction and the fact, Futurist interpreters try to persuade us, that the prophecy does not predict this fact at all; that the ten horns do not symbolize the ten kingdoms into which the old Roman Empire was broken up; but that, leaping over the *twelve centuries marked by this fact*, to a period still future, it predicts the rise of ten individual men, whose brief career of a few years is to be terminated by the Epiphany of Christ!

Is not this to make the prophecy of God of none effect through their interpretation?

And further, as we shall hereafter prove, the *chronology* of these visions is as symbolic as their other features, and is expressed on the year-day scale. The duration assigned to this great power of evil is therefore 1260 years (time, times, and half a time); and this alone decides the question. The ten horns, and their cotemporary the little horn, represent *dynasties*, like the four horns of the Grecian he-goat and the two horns of the Medo-Persian ram.

The symbol employed in the Apocalyptic prophecy to prefigure this evil power equally demands its dynastic character, and forbids the thought that an individual man is intended. It is represented as an *eighth head* of the Roman beast, an eighth form of government, having its seat at Rome. Now none of the previous "heads" of the Roman world were individual rulers; but each consisted of a *series of rulers*. Seven kings formed the
 1 first head, and lasted 220 years; consuls, tribunes,
 2 - 5 decemvirs, and dictators, were the next four heads, and
 governed Rome in turn for nearly 500 years; sixty-five
 6 emperors followed, and ruled the Roman world for 500
 years more. Now the Man of Sin, Antichrist, is to be

the last and the most important "head" of this same Roman beast. If he be a race of rulers enthroned at Rome, and governing thence the Roman world for more than twelve centuries, it is in harmony with all the rest. But if the eighth head represent one man, who exercises authority for only three years and a half, there is an utter violation of all symmetry and proportion in the symbol. Analogy demands that the last head be like all the previous ones, *a race or succession of rulers.*

The Thessalonian prophecy leads us to the same conclusion. The mystery of iniquity was already working in the Apostle's day; that mystery which was to result in the development of the Man of Sin. Now, *if* he be not yet come, and *if* when he comes he is to reign only three and a half years, we have this extraordinary fact; that it has taken Satan eighteen or nineteen centuries to produce this single, short-lived enemy of the Church!

If, on the other hand, Antichrist rose on the fall of the Roman Empire, all is reasonable and natural. Satan worked secretly for three or four centuries, corrupting the Church by false doctrine and worldliness; and at last, having gradually prepared the world and the Church to receive him, he enthroned the Antichrist at Rome, in a race of rulers, who, combining temporal and spiritual power, and using both to hinder the spread of the truth, were to be for more than twelve centuries his principal agents upon earth.

It is not denied that the Thessalonian prophecy gives the impression, *on a cursory perusal*, that it predicts a single individual. This is exactly in harmony with the style of prophetic chronology, with that mysterious year-day system which was selected by God to keep alive the hope and expectation of the Coming of Christ, throughout the whole course of the dispensation. Had the

dynastic character and real period of the son of perdition been revealed clearly, the return of Christ would, to the early Christians, have been postponed to a hopelessly distant future. But, though the early Church knew (after the publication of the second Epistle) that the advent of Antichrist was to precede the Advent of Christ, they supposed he would be an individual, whose period would be brief; and the expectation formed no hindrance to their watching and waiting for the Lord's return.

Many other arguments in favour of the dynastic character of the power answering to the "little horn" and "eighth head," might be adduced; but these must suffice. *The fulfilment is the great proof.* Such a power as is here predicted *has existed*, has done the things this power was to do, has borne the character and undergone the experiences here described; it rose at the crisis here indicated, lasted the period here assigned, answered in every point with the most marvellous exactitude to these prophetic prefigurations, and was recognized by those who suffered under it, as *the* power here intended. If a singularly complex lock is opened by a key equally complex in its structure, who doubts that the one was made to fit the other?

So copious is the evidence of the fulfilment in the history of the Popedom of this remarkable fourfold prophecy, that it is almost impossible fairly to present it in a brief compass. Learned and able writers have filled volumes without number, with proofs, that the Papacy has accomplished every clause of these predictions. Every history of the Middle Ages, every description of the monastic orders, and of the Jesuits, every narrative of the Papacy and its proceedings, every bull, and every decretal, issued by the sovereign Pontiffs, many a monu-

ment, many a medal, and many a mournful martyrology, lend their witness to the fact. Space obliges us to confine ourselves here to the merest outline of the overwhelming mass of historic testimony, that might be adduced on the subject.

I. ORIGIN OF THE MAN OF SIN.

The "little horn," in Daniel, is a horn of the *Roman* beast, that is, a political power, which rules over part of the territory formerly governed by the Cæsars. The eighth head in Revelation is similarly a head of the *Roman* beast, the same beast that was in power when the Apocalypse was written, and had been for centuries previously. Two intimations exist that *Rome itself* was to be the seat of this ruling power: it is an *eighth head*, and the seven previous ones had all ruled at *Rome*; and Paul says that the removal of the Imperial power *from* Rome was a needful preliminary to its rise.

As a *horn*, this power was to be "a little horn"; its dominions were never to be territorially large, nor its *mere* political influence great; and yet it was to be more influential and important than all the rest. It was to displace three horns, as it grew up among the ten, but these were apparently to be replaced, for the horns are always spoken of as *ten*. Though only a *horn*, this power has some of the attributes of a *head*, for its "eyes and mouth" impart to it an incontestable superiority over the rest. In the later vision of John, the same power is represented *as a head*, an "eighth head," representing a former seventh head, which had received a deadly wound. By both emblems it is presented, as in some important sense a *prolongation of the power of the old Roman Empire*. The immediately preceding head, or form of government, was to receive a deadly wound, so that the beast should seem to be for a time destroyed;

but under this eighth head it should revive, and become as strong as ever. The one original Empire was to be broken up; in its stead a number of smaller kingdoms were to arise; and coterminously with their rise was to spring up also this mysterious, peculiar, "little horn," this unique and singularly evil power, territorially small, but yet so influential, that it would take the lead of the rest, become their head, and *reunite, by a new bond, the recently dissevered and independent portions of the Western Empire of Rome.*

Now to any one familiar with the history of Europe, from the division of the Roman Empire into Eastern and Western under Valens and Valentinian, to the time of the Reformation, this prophecy *reads like history*. So exact, so singularly descriptive is the figuration, that if it were proposed to present the phenomena attending the rise of the Papacy in a single symbol, it would be impossible to discover one more appropriate.

After the reception of Christianity by Constantine, and its establishment as the religion of the Empire, corruption and worldliness, which had long been rife in the Church, increased with fearful rapidity. At the close of the fourth century, the bishopric of Rome was already deeply sunk in wickedness; rival bishops contended for the episcopal authority with the carnal weapons and fierce passions of secular rulers, and indulged in luxury and pomp that imitated those of the emperors themselves.

When the empire expired under Augustulus (the hindrance mentioned in Thessalonians being at last removed) the mystery of iniquity, so long working, began to develop itself rapidly. The spiritual power and pretensions of the Papacy were great, though some time still elapsed ere it became *a temporal power*. When the dismemberment of the Roman world by the barbarian invasions

began, Italy fell first to the share of Odoacer and the Heruli. But theirs was never a firm or strong kingdom. The bishops of Rome hated the authority to which they were obliged to submit, and desired its overthrow. In about twenty years from its establishment, this was accomplished, and the *first* "horn" that had sprung up in Italy and hindered (like the defunct empire) the development of the little horn was rooted up before it.

A new power, however, succeeded, and for two generations held dominion over Rome and her bishops. Theodoric, the Ostrogoth, became master of Italy, and the Popes for sixty years had to own him and his successors as superiors and rulers. But their own pretensions and claims were rapidly increasing, and keeping pace with the growing corruption of the Church. The Gothic yoke became unbearable to them, and, mainly through the influence of the Popes, Bellisarius, the great general of the Eastern Emperor Justinian, expelled the Ostrogoths from Italy. A *second* horn had now fallen before the rising power; the Exarchate of Ravenna was established, and very shortly a *third* barbarian power obtained the greater part of Italy. Alboin and his Lombard followers held sway over its fairest territories, though they avoided making Rome their capital. Degraded to the rank of a second city, Rome was left to the care of her bishops, whose authority began to assume a *mixed* temporal and spiritual character. They had as yet no temporal *dominions*, but they were striving to take their place among earthly sovereigns, and even already asserting a superiority to them in certain respects.

The Lombard sway, in its turn, became intolerable to the ambitious Popes of Rome; and at last, through their earnest entreaties, and awful threats, Pepin and Charlemagne came to their rescue, uprooted the Lombards

from Italy, overthrew their power, *and presented their dominions as a free gift to the Pope.*

The *third horn* had fallen before the rising power of the Papacy, and it stood forth at last firmly settled in its place on the head of the Roman beast. "The splendid donation was granted in supreme and absolute dominion, and the world beheld for the first time, *a Christian Bishop, invested with the prerogatives of a temporal prince*: the choice of magistrates, the exercise of justice, the imposition of taxes, the wealth of the Palace of Ravenna."¹

Thus as to the time, place, and manner of its origin, the power of the Popes of Rome fulfilled the symbolic predictions: "I considered the horns; and behold there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots." "The ten horns out of this (fourth) kingdom, are ten kings that shall arise; and another shall rise after them, and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings."

The following extract, from a Roman Catholic writer, could hardly have been differently worded, had he intended to point out the fulfilment of the prophecy of the "little horn" in the rise of the Papacy.

"The rise of the temporal power of the Popes presents to the mind one of the most extraordinary phenomena which the annals of the human race offer to our wonder and admiration. By a singular combination of concurring circumstances, *a new power and a new dominion, grew up, silently but steadily, on the ruins of that Roman Empire*, which had extended its sway over, or made itself respected by, nearly all the nations, peoples, and races, that lived in the period of its strength and

¹ Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, chap. xlix,

glory; and the *new power, of lowly origin*, struck a deeper root, and soon *exercised a wider authority*, than the empire whose gigantic ruins it saw shivered into fragments and mouldering in dust. In Rome itself, the power of the successor of Peter grew side by side with and under the protecting shadow of that of the Emperor; and such was the increasing influence of the Popes, that the majesty of the supreme Pontiff was likely ere long to dim the splendour of the purple. The removal by Constantine of the seat of empire from the West to the East, from the historic banks of the Tiber to the beautiful shores of the Bosphorus, laid the first broad foundation of a sovereignty, which in reality commences from that momentous change. Practically, almost from that day, Rome, which had witnessed the birth, the youth, the splendour, and the decay, of the mighty race by whom her name had been carried to the remotest regions of the then known world, was gradually abandoned by the inheritors of her renown; and its people, deserted by the emperors, and an easy prey to the ravages of the barbarians, whom they had no longer the courage to resist, beheld in the bishop of Rome their guardian, their protector, their father. Year by year the temporal authority of the Popes grew into shape and hardened into strength; without violence, without bloodshed, without fraud, by the force of overwhelming circumstances, fashioned, as if visibly, by the hand of God."

CHAPTER III

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE "MAN OF SIN."—SELF-EXALTING
UTTERANCES.—SELF-EXALTING ACTS.—FALSE DOCTRINES.—
IDOLATRIES.—DOMINION.

THE circumstances connected with the *origin* of the Papacy fulfil then the indications of the prophecy. Has the *character* of this power answered to that attributed to the predicted Antichrist?

He is called "that wicked," or the lawless one, who sets God's revealed will at defiance; his coming is "after the working of Satan"; he "opposeth and exalteth himself," against God, and against His people. He is to be the "Man of *Sin*," the outcome of the working of "a mystery of *iniquity*." He is the very opposite of all that is holy and good, the oppressor of all that love God, for Satan animates him. Further, he is called "the son of perdition," and this name, applied by our Lord to Judas Iscariot, the traitor would prepare us to find the Man of Sin, the Antichrist,¹ *not* in some openly and

¹ "Antichrist" is a name used only in John, in four passages, as follows, "Children, it is the last time: and *as ye have heard that the Antichrist cometh*, even now are there many Antichrists" (1 John ii. 18). "Who is *the liar* but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? This is *the Antichrist* which denieth the Father and the Son" (ii. 22). "This is the spirit of *the Antichrist*, respecting which ye have heard that it cometh" (1 John iv. 3). "Many deceivers are gone forth into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh; this is *the deceiver* and *the Antichrist*." The repeated statements, that Christians *had heard* of the coming of this Anti-

avowedly infidel power, but in a *professedly Christian* one. The "son of perdition" was an apostate disciple, who betrayed his Lord with a kiss of seeming reverence and affection. This name would lead us to expect that a *Judas character* will attach to the great apostasy and its head, and lead us therefore to look for it *in the professing Christian Church*, the sphere in which Paul indeed distinctly states that it will be revealed.

So dark is the moral aspect of the power predicted, whatever it be, that many conceive that *no* power that ever has had an existence can approach its enormity of guilt and evil; and they look, in consequence, for some future monster of iniquity who shall better fulfil the predictions of Scripture.

When this impression is not the result of ignorance of history, it illustrates the way in which familiarity with evil diminishes its enormity in our sight; for it may be safely asserted that all these prophecies foretell has found its realization in the line of Roman Pontiffs.

It must be remembered that the Popes of Rome are guilty before God, not only for all the sins they have committed, but for all the sins they have connived at, for all the sins they have suggested, for all the sins they have encouraged and sanctioned, and, above all, for the sins they have *commanded*. When their personal character and the influence of their examples are considered, when the tendency of the institutions they have invented and maintained are examined, when their

christ, prove that John alludes under this name to the "little horn" of Daniel, and the "man of sin" of Paul. The name itself means, not as is sometimes asserted, an avowed *antagonist* of Christ, but one professing to be a *vice-Christ*, a *rival-Christ*, one who would assume the character, occupy the place, and fulfil the functions of Christ. The incipient Antichrists of John's own day denied the Father and the Son, *by their false doctrines about them*.

bulls and laws are studied, and when all these results are multiplied by the extent of their dominion, the length of its duration, and the assumption of infallibility and *Divine* authority that has accompanied it,—the impression of unparalleled iniquity produced on the mind, defies all power of expression; language seems too weak to embody it, and the words of inspiration seem to fall short of, rather than to exceed, the reality.

Not only have a number of the Roman Pontiffs been, personally, *exceedingly* wicked men; not only have they thus abused their high position, by setting examples of sin of the most flagrant kind; but by their laws, exempting their innumerable clergy in all lands from the jurisdiction of the civil power, they have protected others in sinning in the same way; and they have *led others into sin* on a scale that it is positively appalling to contemplate.

Take for instance Papal doctrines and practices on the subject of forgiveness of sin in connection with the granting of *indulgences*. The Pope made a bargain with sinners, and on certain conditions, such as the joining in a crusade, the helping to extirpate so-called heresy, the performance of certain pilgrimages, the repetition of prescribed formulas, or the payment of money, he agreed to give them *pardons for sin*. Finding this traffic singularly lucrative,—for what will not men do to indulge in sin with impunity,—it was developed into a system of fabulous wickedness. Indulgences for the dead, as well as for the living, were freely sold, and thus the affections as well as the selfishness of men, were turned to account for the replenishment of the Papal treasury. Some of these indulgences expressly mentioned the very sins, which the Scriptures declare, exclude from the kingdom of heaven. The number of years by which the torments of purgatory were to be

abridged was extravagant to the last degree. John XII. granted "ninety thousand years of pardon for deadly sins," for the devout repetition of three prayers, written in the chapel of the Holy Cross at Rome.

The sale of indulgences for money was the immediate cause of the glorious Reformation. The intense disgust with which they came to be regarded, in consequence of the unblushing effrontery, and shameless trickery, connected with their sale, roused all Germany to resist their introduction, and stirred up Martin Luther to examine into the rotten foundation on which they rested. The indulgences sold were in the following form, "Our Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on thee, M. N.; and absolve thee by the merits of His most holy sufferings. I, in virtue of the apostolic power committed to me, absolve thee from all . . . excesses, sins, and crimes, that thou mayest have committed, however great and enormous they may be, and of whatever kind. . . . I remit the pains thou wouldest have had to endure in purgatory, . . . I restore thee to the innocence and purity of thy baptism, so that at the moment of death, the gates of the place of torment shall be shut against thee, and the gates of Paradise open to thee. And if thou shouldest live long, this grace continueth unchangeable, till the time of thy end. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen. The brother John Tetzel, commissary, hath signed this with his own hand."

There was a published scale of the prices for which different sins could be pardoned; and that the gain of money was the only object was clear, from the enormous price charged for indulgences for certain crimes, likely to be committed by the rich,—crimes only by the laws of the *Church*,—while the grossest violations of the law of God were excused for a trifle. The royal, and merely

conventional crime, of marriage with a first cousin, cost £1000, while the terrible sins of wife murder or parricide cost only £4!

“Whoso confesseth and forsaketh his sin, shall find mercy”; what shall we say of him who offers boundless mercy, to those who so love and cleave to their sins, as to be willing to pay enormous prices for permission to commit them? of him who makes plenary pardon dependent on mere outward acts, prayers, pilgrimages, payments, or even on the commission of other gross sins? The Psalmist prayed, “Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins”; what shall we say of him, who encourages to presumptuous sin, by the prospect of plenary pardon at the moment of death, on condition of holding a candle, or kissing a bead?

That this practice of granting indulgences is a mighty and effective inducement to sin, no one acquainted with human nature, and the operation of moral causes, can question: and, worse still, it misrepresents the atonement of Christ, asserting its insufficiency to put away sin; it denies the boundlessness and freedom of the love of God, and is a characteristic creation of “that wicked, whose coming is after the working of Satan.”

Another of the exceedingly sinful deeds of the Papacy is its institution and patronage of the *Order of the Jesuits*. This Order, which has dared to appropriate to itself the Name which is above every name, by calling itself “The Society of Jesus,” deserves rather, from the nature of its doctrines, and from the work it has done in the world, to be called “The Order of Satan.” Founded by Ignatius Loyola, a Spanish officer, contemporary with Luther, its great object was to subjugate the whole human race to the power of the Papacy. From the book of the “Constitutions” of the Jesuits, we

obtain evidence that condemns their Order as a masterpiece of the father of lies.

Expediency, in its most licentious form, is the basis of their whole system of morality. Their doctrine of "probability"; their doctrine of "mental reservation," by which lying and perjury are justified; their doctrine of "intention," which renders the most solemn oath of no power to bind a man; the way in which, by their glosses, they make void the law of God in every one of its precepts, and give licence to every crime, not excepting murder, and even parricide,—render their whole system of morals a bottomless abyss of iniquity.

This is no mere Protestant account of the Jesuits; their extraordinary viciousness has led to their suppression, and expulsion, at various times, by different Catholic sovereigns in Europe.¹ In stating their grounds for such action, these monarchs give descriptions of Jesuit morality, which could scarcely be worse. The Catholic king of Portugal says: "It cannot be, but that the licentiousness introduced by the Jesuits, of which the three leading features are falsehood, murder, and perjury, should give a new character to morals. Their doctrines render murder innocent, sanctify falsehood, authorize perjury, deprive the laws of their power, destroy the submission of subjects, allow individuals the liberty of killing, calumniating, lying and forswearing themselves, as their advantage may dictate; they remove the fear of Divine and human laws, so that *Christian and civil society could not exist*, where they are paramount. From 1555 to 1773 they suffered no less than *thirty-seven expulsions*, all on account of *their iniquitous doctrines and evil practices*."

¹ The Jesuits were altogether suppressed, by Papal decree, from 1773 to 1801.—ED,

The Catholic University of Paris, in 1643, said of them: "The laws of God have been so sophisticated by their unheard-of subtleties, that there is no longer any difference between vice and virtue; they promise impunity to the most flagrant crimes; their doctrines are inimical to all order; and if such a pernicious theology were received, deserts and forests would be preferable to cities; and society with wild beasts, who have only their natural arms, would be better than society with men, who, in addition to the violence of their passions, would be instructed by *this doctrine of devils* to dissimulate and feign, in order to destroy others with greater impunity. *It is a device of the great enemy of souls.*" The Parliament of Paris, in 1762, used language quite as strong in a memorial to the king, accompanying a collection of extracts from 147 Jesuit authors, which they presented to him, "that he might be acquainted with the wickedness of the doctrine constantly held by the Jesuits, from the institution of their Society to the present moment—a doctrine *authorizing* robbery, lying, perjury, impurity; all passions, and all crimes; *inculcating* homicide, parricide, and regicide; overturning religion and sanctioning magic, blasphemy, irreligion, and idolatry."

The book of "secret instructions," generally attributed to Lainez, the second Father-general of the Order, contains directions so unprincipled, that on the first page it is ordained that, if the book fell into the hands of strangers, it was to be positively denied that these were the rules of the Society! This book gives directions for the attainment of power, influence, and wealth, by means of the vilest intrigues: the vices of the rich and great were to be pandered to in every way; spies were to be diligently sought and liberally rewarded;

animosities were to be fostered and stirred up among enemies, in order to weaken them; the dying were to be watched as if by vultures, and promised *canonization* by the Pope, if they would bequeath their property to this Order. Women who were found in confession to have bad husbands, were to be instructed to withdraw a sum of money secretly, to be given to the Society, as a sacrifice for their husbands' sins. To all classes, but especially to the great and rich, any vicious indulgence they desired might be allowed, in order to soothe and win them, provided public scandal were avoided. These and multitudes of similar injunctions are based on the doctrine, that we may do evil that good may come, that "the end sanctifies the means." Scripture says of those who hold and teach this doctrine, that their "damnation is just."

The same principle led Jesuit missionaries into the most sinful compromises with heathen superstitions and philosophies in different parts of the world. In India they swore that they were Brahmins of pure descent, sanctioned some of the most abominable habits of idolatry, and practised some of the worst Hindu austerities, to acquire fame. In China, they pretended that there was only a shade of difference between the doctrine of Christ and the teachings of Confucius; and to make proselytes, they taught, instead of pure Christianity, a corrupt system of religion and morality, that was quite consistent with the indulgence of all the passions. Nay, so far did they go, that, finding the Crucifixion was a stumbling-block to the philosophic Chinese, as to the Jews of old, they actually *denied that Christ was ever crucified at all*, and said it was a base calumny invented by the Jews to throw contempt on the Gospel! They told the Red Indians that Jesus Christ was a mighty chief, who had scalped more men and

women and children than any warrior that had ever lived! Having no real principles, they were willing to make *any* compromise, no matter how foul, provided they could by it advance the interests of their Order, or swell the roll of recruits to the Roman army.

Now, when we remember that the teachings of these Jesuits are not only permitted, but received as standard authorities in the Roman Catholic Church, and directly sanctioned by the Popes, what shall we say of the so-called Vicar of Christ? Is not this the deceivableness of unrighteousness? Is not this the doctrine of devils? And is not he who sanctions and patronizes such an "Order" of Satan, "the lawless one"? Is he not, and does he not richly deserve to be, "a son of perdition"? Is he not a "man of *sin*" who speaks lies in hypocrisy, having his conscience seared with a hot iron? Where, if not here, shall we ever detect the predicted mystery of iniquity?

That many of the Roman Pontiffs have been wicked men, there can be no doubt; that many of their institutions, besides the two just considered, have been fearfully fruitful sources of sin, is also unquestionable; but perhaps nothing more fully warrants the application to them of the distinctive title, "The Man of Sin," than the fact that they have *commanded* sin. If Aaron was doubly guilty because he *led the people* to worship the golden calf; if the wickedness of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, is intensified by the fact that he "*caused Israel to sin*," what must be the dark guilt of those who have *led* the professing Church of Christ into the foulest idolatry, and into sin of every conceivable kind, not only by example, not only by false doctrines and evil practice, but also by direct *commands*—commands delivered in the name of the Lord, and believed by the people to have Divine authority; and this not to a few,

not as an occasional thing, or during a brief period, but to all Papal Christendom and throughout long ages!

And what must be the guilt, in the eyes of God, of the men who withhold the Word from myriads of perishing sinners over whose consciences they have perfect sway!

III. SELF-EXALTING UTTERANCES.

One of the leading characteristics of the power symbolized by the "little horn" is "a mouth speaking great things." The destruction of the beast is said to be "because of the great words which the little horn spake." The same point is noted also in Revelation xiii. 5, where the beast is said to have "a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemies." Paul similarly predicts of the Man of Sin, "that he will oppose and *exalt himself* above all that is called God or that is worshipped." We must therefore inquire whether *self-exalting utterances of a peculiar impious nature*, have been a characteristic of the Papacy? We turn to the public documents issued by various Popes, and find that they have fulfilled in a marvellous way this prediction; the pretensions they have made are blasphemies; the claims they have put forth, are, to be equal, if not superior to God Himself; no power on earth has ever advanced similar pretensions.

Fox, in his *Acts and Monuments*, gives extracts from two hundred and twenty-three authentic documents, comprising decrees, decretals, extravagants, pontificals, and bulls, all of which are indisputable evidence. Twenty pages of small type in a large volume, are filled with the "great words" of the Popes, taken from these two hundred and twenty-three documents alone. What a crop would a complete collection of Papal publications afford! Space forbids many quotations; let the reader judge of the mass from

the following samples, which we blend into one, in order to help the conception. If "he that exalteth himself shall be abased," what degradation can be commensurate with such self-exaltation as this?

"All the earth is my diocese, and I the ordinary of all men, having the authority of the King of all kings upon subjects. I am all in all and above all, so that God Himself, and I, the Vicar of God, have both one consistory, and I am able to do almost all that God can do. In all things that I list, my will is to stand for reason, for I am able by the law to dispense above the law, and of wrong to make justice in correcting laws and changing them. . . . Wherefore, if those things that I do be said not to be done of man, but of God: *what can you make me but God?* Again, if prelates of the Church be called and counted of Constantine for gods, I then, being above all prelates, seem by this reason to be *above all gods*. Wherefore, no marvel if it be in my power to change time and times, to alter and abrogate laws, to dispense with all things, *yea, with the precepts of Christ*; for where Christ biddeth Peter put up his sword, and admonishes His disciples not to use any outward force in revenging themselves, do not I, Pope Nicholas, writing to the bishops of France, exhort them to draw out their material swords? And, whereas Christ was present Himself at the marriage in Cana of Galilee, do not I, Pope Martin, in my distinction, inhibit the spiritual clergy to be present at marriage-feasts, and also to marry? Moreover, where Christ biddeth us lend without hope of gain, do not I, Pope Martin, give dispensation for the same? What should I speak of murder, making it to be no murder or homicide to slay them that be excommunicated? Likewise, against the law of nature, item against the apostles, also against the canons of the apostles, I can and do dispense; for where they, in their canon, command a priest for fornication to be deposed, I, through the authority of Silvester, do alter the rigour of that constitution, considering the minds and bodies also of men now to be weaker than they were then. . . . Wherefore, as I began, so I conclude, commanding, declaring, and pronouncing, to stand UPON NECESSITY OF SALVATION, FOR EVERY HUMAN CREATURE TO BE SUBJECT TO ME."

Add to these utterances, which might be multiplied by the thousand, the usual formula of investiture with

the Papal tiara: "Receive this triple crown, and know that thou art the father of princes, and *the king and ruler of the world.*" And in proof that the claims here advanced are no obsolete mediæval assumptions, abandoned in modern times, but the unchangeable voice of the Papacy, take a few "great words" from a comparatively recent sermon of the principal representative of Rome in England, Cardinal Manning, who puts the following language into the mouth of the Pope.

"You say I have no authority over the Christian world, that I am not the Vicar of the Good Shepherd, that I am not the supreme interpreter of the Christian faith. I am all these. You ask me to abdicate, to renounce my supreme authority. You tell me I ought to submit to the civil power, that I am the subject of the King of Italy, and from him I am to receive instructions as to the way I should exercise the civil power. I say I am liberated from all civil subjection, that my Lord made me the subject of no one on earth, king or otherwise; that in His right I am Sovereign. I acknowledge no civil superior. I am the subject of no prince, and I claim more than this. I claim to be the Supreme Judge and director of the consciences of men; of the peasant that tills the field, and the prince that sits on the throne; of the household that lives in the shade of privacy, and the Legislature that makes laws for kingdoms. I am the sole, last, Supreme Judge of what is right and wrong."

In full harmony with this assumption is the new definition of Papal infallibility: "The Roman Pontiff, when he speaks '*ex cathedra*,' that is, when, in discharge of his office of pastor and doctor of all Christians, by virtue of his supreme apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine regarding faith and morals, to be held by the

universal Church, *he enjoys infallibility*, and that therefore such definitions of the Roman Pontiff are irreformable of themselves, and not from the consent of the Church. And if any one presume to contradict this definition, let him be anathema."

But actions speak louder than words! The Popes have not confined their self-exaltation to empty boastings. They have *practically* exalted themselves "above all that is called God, or that is worshipped." The following is extracted from the "*Ceremoniale Romanum*," and describes the first public appearance of the Pope in St. Peter's, on his election to the Pontificate. After the investiture with the scarlet Papal robes, the vest covered with pearls, and the mitre studded with precious stones, the new Pope is conducted to the altar, before which he prostrates himself in prayer, bowing as before the seat of God. An awful sequel then follows. We read: "The Pope rises, and, wearing his mitre, is lifted up by the cardinals, and is placed by them *upon the altar to sit there*. One of the bishops kneels, and begins the *Te Deum*. In the meantime the cardinals kiss the feet and hands and face of the Pope." This ceremony is commonly called by Roman Catholic writers "*The Adoration*"; it has been observed for many centuries, and was performed at the inauguration of Pius IX. A coin has been struck in the Papal mint which represents it, and the legend is, "*Quem creant adorant*," "whom they create (Pope) they adore." The language in which this adoration is couched is blasphemous to a degree. At the coronation of Pope Innocent X., Cardinal Colonna on his knees, in his own name and that of the clergy of St. Peter's, addressed the following words to the Pope: "Most holy and blessed father, head of the Church, ruler of the world, to whom

the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed, whom the angels in heaven revere, and the gates of hell fear, and all the world adores, we specially venerate, worship, and adore thee."

The very assumption the Pope makes, to be Christ's Vicar involves self-exaltation. How should one representing the Judge of all be judged by any? He might *make* laws, but he held himself above all law. Was not Christ King of kings and Lord of lords? How then could *he*, the representative of Christ, do other than regard all kings, and rulers, and potentates, as his subjects, to be crowned and uncrowned by him at his pleasure? His dominion he likened to that of the sun, all other dominion being like that of the moon and satellites, immeasurably inferior. Pope Celestine III., when crowning Henry VI., expressed in action his sense of his own superiority to all monarchs: "The Lord Pope sat in the pontifical chair, holding the golden imperial crown between his *feet*; and the Emperor, bending his head, and the Empress, received the crown *from the feet* of the Lord Pope. But the Lord Pope instantly struck with his foot the Emperor's crown, and cast it upon the ground, signifying that he had the power of deposing him, from the empire, if he were undeserving of it. The cardinals lifted up the crown, and placed it upon the Emperor's head."

We read, "great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh," the Most High stooped and made Himself of no reputation. May we not say, in considering the self-exaltation of the Popes of Rome, great is the "mystery of iniquity," man, sinful, mortal man, exalting himself to be as God! And strange to say, men have allowed it: "All the world wondered after the beast." It was no empty boast of Gregory II.:

"All the kings of the West reverence the Pope as a god on earth." Sismondi describes how Pepin and the Franks received him "*as a divinity*." The mighty Emperor Charlemagne consented to receive his title and empire as a donation from the Pope; and ere long the coronation oath of Western kings came to include a vow, to be "faithful and submissive to the Pope." Kings and emperors consented, like our own John, and like the Emperor Otho, and many others, to hold their dominions as vassals of the Pope, and to resign them at his bidding: to hold his stirrup, and lead his palfrey, like servants, to kiss his feet and bow in his presence like slaves. In his full fame, and flushed with victory, the great Francis I., of France, in his interview with Leo X. at Bologna, just before the Reformation, "knelt three times in approaching him, and then kissed his feet." The Emperor Henry of Germany, driven to the most abject humiliation by the terror of a Papal interdict, sought pardon, barefoot and clothed in sack-cloth, and was kept waiting three wintry days and nights at the doors of the supreme Pontiff, ere he could secure an interview.

It is difficult in our day to credit the records which reveal the unbounded power of the Pope during the dark ages, and the nature and extent of the claims he asserted to the reverence and subjection of mankind. If kings and emperors yielded him abject homage, the common people regarded him as a deity. His dogmas were received as oracles, his bulls and sentences were to them the voice of God. The Sicilian ambassadors prostrated themselves before Pope Martin, with the thrice-repeated cry, "Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world." "The people think of the Pope as the one God that has power over all things, in earth and in heaven," said Gerston. The fifth Lateran

Council subscribed, just before the Reformation, a decree which declared, that "as there was but one body of the Church, so there was but one head, viz., Christ's Vicar, and that it was *essential to the salvation of every human being to be subject to the Roman Pontiff*."

Every spiritual as well as every ecclesiastical office of Christ has been arrogated to himself by the "Man of Sin."

IV. SUBTLETIES, FALSE DOCTRINES, AND LYING WONDERS.

The foregoing are not the only characteristics which lead the careful student of Scripture and of history to recognize in the Papacy the great predicted power of evil that was to arise in the latter times of the fourth great empire, and fix its seat at Rome. The coming of the Antichrist was to be "with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness." We must inquire whether this mark has been visibly impressed on the Papal dynasty.

Macaulay says: "It is impossible to deny, that the polity of the Church of Rome is *the very masterpiece of human wisdom*. In truth nothing but such a polity could, against such assaults, have borne up such doctrines. The experience of twelve hundred eventful years, the ingenuity and patient care of forty generations of statesmen, have improved that polity to such perfection, that *among the contrivances which have been devised for deceiving and oppressing mankind, it occupies the highest place*. The stronger our conviction that reason and Scripture were decidedly on the side of Protestantism, the greater is the reluctant admiration with which we regard *that system of tactics* against which reason and Scripture were employed in vain." This wonderful policy of the Papacy may be viewed as

an expression of Satanic genius, if we may use the expression, or as a fruit of human genius. Regarded as "the working of Satan," it is in perfect harmony with all the other workings of him, who has been a liar from the beginning. It has been by means of a *counterfeit Christianity* that Satan has, through the Papacy, resisted the spread of true Christianity. The Papacy has its counterfeit high priest, the Pope; its counterfeit sacrifice, the Mass; its counterfeit Bible, tradition; its counterfeit mediators, the Virgin, the saints, and angels; the forms have been copied, the realities set aside. Satan inaugurated and developed a system, not antagonistic to Christianity, but a counterfeit of it; and as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so (*i.e., by imitation*) he has withstood Christ.

But viewed as a fabrication of human ambition and wickedness, the subtlety with which the Papacy has adapted itself to its end, is a marvel of genius. It has employed a policy unmatched in dissimulation and craft; a sagacity distinguished by largeness of conception combined with attention to detail, irresistible energy, indomitable perseverance, and, when art was unavailing, overwhelming physical force.

"The Pontiffs were perpetually reminding the world, that they were the successors of the Cæsars, that the two Romes were linked by an indissoluble bond, and that to the latter had descended the heritage of glory and dominion acquired by the former. The Pontiffs also claimed to be successors of the Apostles: a more masterly stroke of policy still. As the successor of Peter, the Pope was greater than as the successor of Cæsar. The one made him a king, the other made him king of kings; the one gave him the power of the sword, the other invested him with the still more sacred

authority of the keys. The Papacy is the ghost of Peter, with the shadowy diadem of the old Cæsars.”¹

Every doctrine and dogma of the Papacy is calculated *to exalt the priesthood*. By the doctrine of *tradition*, the priest becomes the channel of Divine revelation, and by that of *inherent efficacy in the sacraments*, the channel of Divine grace: men are wholly dependent on the priesthood for a knowledge of the will of God, and an enjoyment of the salvation of God.

The subtlety of the Papal system is seen also in the adaptation of its doctrines to all classes of men. “It provides convents for the ascetic and the mystic; carnivals for the gay; missions for the enthusiast; penances for the man suffering from remorse; sisterhoods of mercy for the benevolent; crusades for the chivalrous; secret missions for the man whose genius lies in intrigue; the Inquisition, with its racks and screws, for the cruel bigot; indulgences for the man of wealth and pleasure; purgatory to awe the refractory, and frighten the vulgar; and a subtle theology for the casuist and the dialectitian.”²

The doctrine of *purgatory*, unknown in the Church till the end of the sixth century, could never have obtained currency but for the aid of fictitious miracles,—visions of departed persons broiling on gridirons, roasting on spits, shivering in water, or burning in fire. Such “lying wonders” were therefore freely invented by the priests, and readily credited by the people; and by their means the doctrine, which was one of the most *lucrative* ever invented, was soon firmly established. Time would fail us to speak of the “lying wonders” connected with the relics, shrines of pilgrimage, and false miracles of the Papacy: their name is legion, and their folly is exceeded by their guilt.

¹ Wylie, *The Papacy*.

² *Ibid*.

CHAPTER IV

PERSECUTIONS BY THE "MAN OF SIN"

WE must pass on to note *persecutions of the saints*, for in the prophecies of Antichrist under consideration, this feature is conspicuous. Daniel says of the "little horn" that "he shall *wear out* the saints of the Most High, and they shall be given into his hand." And John says, "It was given unto him to make war with the saints and to overcome them."

Now it is a notorious fact that the Church of Rome considers heresy (that is, any dissent from her teachings) the worst crime of which a man can be guilty; she asserts that no heretic can be saved. She teaches that no faith is to be kept with heretics, that they are to be cut off from all social intercourse, deprived of all natural, civil, and political rights; that they forfeit all claim and right to their property; that they are to be put to death, and that if they have died a natural death, their very bones and dust are to be taken up and burnt. And who are to be regarded as heretics? Let the Bull *In Coena Domini* (or, "at the Supper of the Lord") answer. Every Thursday of Passion Week, that is, the day before Good Friday, this Bull is read in the presence of the Pope, Cardinals, Bishops, and a crowd of people. His Holiness appears with a pair of peacock's feathers, one on each side of his head, and when the Bull is finished, flings a lighted torch into the court of the palace, to make the effect of the anathema the more

dreadful.¹ The object of the Bull, as defined by Pope Paul III., is "to preserve the purity of the Christian religion, and to maintain the unity of the faithful." The following is one of its clauses. "We excommunicate and anathematize in the name of God Almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and by the authority of the blessed Apostles, Peter and Paul, and by our own, all *Hussites, Wickliffites, Lutherans, Zwinglians, Calvinists, Anabaptists, Huguenots, Trinitarians, and apostates from the faith, and all other heretics*, by whatsoever name they are called, and of whatsoever sect they be, as also their adherents, receivers, favours, and generally all defenders of them; together with all who without our authority, or that of the Apostolic See, knowingly read, keep, print, or any way for any cause whatsoever, publicly or privately, on any pretext or colour, defend their books, containing heresy or treating of religion."

These are the *principles* of Popery, as stated by acknowledged authorities of her Church, and pronounced applicable to all times.

¹ I am indebted to Baron Porcelli for the following facts. The Bull *In Coena Domini* was withdrawn after 1869, owing to protests by various governments who had representatives at the Vatican; and the Constitution "*Apostolicae Sedis*" was substituted for it (see Quirinus, p. 105; and Friedberg's *Acta et Decreta Con. Vat.* p. 77—Friburg, 1871). The former used to be publicly read in the porch of St. Peter's, to a crowd, and on its conclusion a lighted torch was thrown down the steps into the Piazza. The "Constitution" substituted for it is read inside St. Peter's, without the ceremony of the lighted torch; but the language of it is almost as bad as that of the Bull. The Bull has not been annulled, nor can be. (I may add, that a pamphlet in my own possession, dated 1848 A.D., traces the *annual custom* as far back as A.D. 1299, and follows the development of the *Bull* from that date, by incorporation of curses from other Bulls, till it reached its present form about A.D. 1600. It states that the Bull is regarded by Roman Canonists as "the chiefest and firmest pillar" of Papal usurpation.)—ED.

As to the *practice* of this unchangeable Church, it would soil the pages of this book if details were given of the cruelties practised continually on those who at any time ventured to differ from it. *As some luxurious Emperors of Rome exhausted the whole art of pleasure, so that a reward was promised to any who should invent a new one ; so have Romish persecutors exhausted all the art of pain, so that it will now be difficult to discover or invent a new kind of it, which they have not already practised upon those marked out for "heretics."*

If such treatment as this, inflicted on successive generations of disciples of Christ for centuries, be not "wearing out the saints of the Most High," what could be? History affords no parallel, for the Pagan persecutions were brief in comparison to the Papal.

The following is one of the authorized curses, published in the Romish Pontifical, to be pronounced on heretics by Romish priests, "May God Almighty and all His saints curse them, with the curse with which the devil and his angels are cursed. Let them be destroyed out of the land of the living. Let the vilest of deaths come upon them, and let them descend alive into the pit. Let their seed be destroyed from the earth ; by hunger, and thirst, and nakedness, and all distress, let them perish. May they have all misery, and pestilence, and torment. Let all they have be cursed. Always and everywhere let them be cursed. Speaking and silent let them be cursed. Within and without let them be cursed. By land and by sea let them be cursed. From the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, let them be cursed. Let their eyes become blind, let their ears become deaf, let their mouth become dumb, let their tongue cleave to their jaws, let not their hands handle, let not their feet walk. Let all the members of the

body be cursed. Cursed let them be standing, lying, from this time forth for ever; and thus let their candle be extinguished in the presence of God, at the day of judgment. Let their burial be with dogs and asses. Let hungry wolves devour their corpses. Let the devil and his angels be their companions for ever. Amen, amen; so be it, so let it be."

Entire volumes would be requisite to give an adequate idea of the way in which the Papacy has worn out and overcome the saints of the Most High, by her cruel persecutions. The Apocalypse presents us with two great companies of martyrs (Rev. vi. 9, xv. 2), one slain by Pagan Emperors, on account of their testimony against heathen idolatry; the other slain by Christian Popes, on account of their testimony against Christian idolatry, against the corruptions and false doctrines of the Papacy. The latter company in number *enormously exceeds the former*; we must rise to *tens of millions* to express the multitude of the saints of Christ, whose blood has been shed by the self-styled Vicar of Christ on earth!

The *Inquisition*,—a name at which humanity has learned to shudder,—is a long and supremely cruel and wicked history compressed into one word! Instituted for the avowed purpose of suppressing heresy, it was established in every country which submitted to Papal authority. In Spain alone it has been proved by the careful statistical investigations of Llorente, that between the years 1481 and 1808 over *three hundred and forty-one thousand persons* were condemned by this "Holy Office," of whom 31,912 were burned alive, 17,000 burned in effigy, and nearly 300,000 tortured and condemned to severe penances. Every Catholic country in Europe, Asia, and America, had its Inquisition, and its consequent unexplained arrests, indefinitely long

imprisonments of innocent persons, its secret investigations, its horrible torture chambers, and dreadful dungeons, its *auto da fés*, or burnings of heretics, and its thousand nameless cruelties and injustices.

When the French took Toledo, and broke open the Inquisition prison there, we read, "Graves seemed to open, and pale figures like ghosts issued from dungeons which emitted a sepulchral odour. Bushy beards hanging down over the breast, and nails grown like birds' claws, disfigured the skeletons, who with labouring bosoms inhaled, for the first time for a long series of years, the fresh air. Many of them were reduced to cripples, the head inclined forward, and the arms and hands hanging down, rigid and helpless: they had been confined in dens so low they could not rise up in them: . . . in spite of all the care of the surgeons, many of them expired the same day. The light of the sun made a particularly painful impression on the optic nerve. On the following day General Lasalle minutely inspected the place, attended by several officers of his staff. The number of machines for torture . . . thrilled even men inured to the battle-field with horror; only one of these, unique in its kind for refined cruelty, seems deserving of more particular notice.

"In a recess in a subterraneous vault, contiguous to the private hall for examinations, stood a wooden figure, made by the hands of monks, and representing the Virgin Mary. A gilded glory encompassed her head, and in her right hand she held a banner. It struck us all, at first sight, as suspicious, that, notwithstanding the silken robe, descending on each side in ample folds from her shoulders, she should wear a sort of cuirass. On closer scrutiny, it appeared that the fore part of the body was stuck full of extremely sharp nails and small

narrow knife-blades, with the points of both turned towards the spectator. The arms and hands were jointed; and machinery behind the partition set the figure in motion. One of the servants of the Inquisition was compelled, by command of the General, to work the *machine*, as he termed it. When the figure extended her arms, as though to press some one most lovingly to her heart, the well-filled knapsack of a Polish grenadier was made to supply the place of a living victim. The statue hugged it closer and closer; and when the attendant, agreeably to orders, made the figure unclasp her arms and return to her former position, the knapsack was perforated to the depth of two or three inches, and remained hanging on the points of the nails and knife-blades. To such an infernal purpose, and in a building erected in honour of the true faith, was the Madonna rendered subservient!"

Gigantic enterprises of *extermination* of Christian confessors were from time to time undertaken by the Popes of Rome. Witness the bloody "crusade" against the Albigenses, described by Sismondi, and the religious wars against the Waldenses, narrated by Monastier and others. Pope Alexander III. began the persecution against these "saints," whose only crime was that they held the truth of the Gospel and read the Scriptures; he confined himself to excommunications, anathemas, and decrees, by which they were rendered incapable of holding offices of trust, honour, or profit, and by which their lands were seized, and their goods confiscated. Innocent III., finding that they grew and prospered in spite of this, instigated sterner repressive measures; and the fierce and bloodthirsty cruelty with which his behests were obeyed has added to history one of its very darkest chapters.

The dreadful sufferings inflicted on the peaceful and industrious Vaudois, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, are well known. A series of persecutions of all who would not embrace the Catholic faith,—by exile, cruelty, and massacre,—was ended only by urgent representations from the Protestant Powers of Europe. In the end, a little band of eight hundred survivors made their way back to their valleys, under the leadership of Arnaud, who himself recounts their triumph over apparently insuperable difficulties.¹

Is further proof of the persecuting spirit of the Roman Pontiffs needed? Look at *Ireland* in 1641, when the Romanist Bishops proclaimed a “war of religion,” and incited the people, by every means in their power, to massacre the Protestants. North, south, east, and west, throughout the island, Protestant blood flowed in rivers; houses were reduced to ashes, villages and towns all but destroyed, in the deadly strife; the very cattle of the Protestants were inhumanly tortured; the only burial allowed to the martyrs was the burial of the living, and their persecutors took a fiendish delight, in hearing their cries and groans, issuing from the earth.

In Armagh, four thousand Protestants were drowned; in Cavan, the road for twelve miles together was stained red with the gory track of the wounded fugitives; sixty children were abandoned in the flight, by parents fiercely hunted by the blood-hounds of the Papacy, who declared that any who helped or even buried these little ones, should be buried by their sides; seventeen adults were buried alive at Fermanagh, and in Kilkenny seventy-two. In the province of Ulster alone, upwards of one hundred and fifty-four thousand Protestants were massacred or expelled from Ireland. O’Niel, the Romish

¹ Arnaud : *Glorieuse Rentrée des Vaudois dans leurs Vallées.*

Primate of all Ireland, declared this rebellion to be "a pious and lawful war"; and Pope Urban VIII., by a Bull, dated May 1643, granted "full and absolute remission of all their sins," to those who had taken part in "gallantly doing what in them lay, to extirpate and wholly root out, the pestiferous leaven of heretical contagion."¹

But France was the scene of the greatest national crime which even the Papacy has ever instigated and approved, *the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day*, planned by the infamous Catherine de Medicis, and ordered by her weak and wretched son, Charles IX. The horrible story of this unparalleled atrocity is too well known to need recounting here. In Paris alone the blood of over ten thousand innocent Protestant citizens deluged the streets, and for a whole week the shouts of "Kill, kill," resounded on every hand. In Rouen from one to two thousand were slaughtered; and a similar number at Lyons; at Orleans five hundred; every town and village became a scene of carnage. Some writers compute that at least one hundred thousand persons fell in this terrible massacre; others put the number lower. At the most moderate calculation, thirty to forty thousand Protestants perished on account of their faith, in that fatal month of August 1572. All the princes of Europe expressed their indignation at the foul treachery, excepting the King of Spain and the Pope. The former wrote to congratulate Charles IX. on the "triumph of the Church militant," which his conduct had secured. The Pope, Gregory XIII., who was privy to the plot, celebrated a *Te Deum*

¹ *History of the Attempts of the Irish Papists to Extirpate the Protestants in the Kingdom of Ireland.* By Sir John Temple, Master of the Rolls.

on hearing the news, ordered a jubilee, and a solemn procession, which he accompanied himself, to thank God for this glorious success; he sent a nuncio to Paris to congratulate the king, had a medal struck in memory of the happy event, and a picture of the massacre painted and hung in the Vatican. A scroll at the top contained a Latin inscription to the effect, *The Pontiff approves the murder of Coligny.*

Tremendous as this blow had been, it did not crush Protestantism in France; a twelfth part of the entire population of the country were still attached to the Reformed religion. Henry IV., on ascending the throne, issued, in 1598, the Edict of Nantes, which placed Protestants on an equal footing with Catholics in regard to civil rights, and the free exercise of their religion. The Huguenots soon began to recover from the effects of past persecutions; but the gleam of prosperity was of short duration. Oppression and injustice gradually increased, till, on the accession of Louis XIV., they were so galling, that eight hundred thousand of the best Huguenot families of France emigrated to England and other countries, to find the liberty to worship God denied them in their own. At last, in 1685, the Edict of Nantes, and all the other concessions made to the Reformed, were *revoked completely*; their churches were demolished; their meetings prohibited; their schools closed; their children, from five to sixteen, taken from them to be educated as Catholics; while at the same time they were forbidden to emigrate. A reward of five thousand five hundred livres was offered, for information leading to the capture of any one of the Huguenot preachers. Persecution waxed hotter and hotter; secret meetings, surprised by the dragoons, were at once turned into scenes of slaughter. Incredible

tortures were invented, and cruelties, the recital of which is almost impossible, were perpetrated by the Romish party, on their unoffending fellow-subjects. The Protestants, driven to desperation, rose at last in the Cevennes, and in 1702, the war of the "Camisards" began. A Huguenot historian of this dreadful civil war says, "Never did hell in the direst persecution invent or employ means so diabolical and inhuman as the dragoons, and the monks who head them, have used to destroy us. These cruelties were general in France, but most violent in our Cevennes." The Pope, Clement XI., did all in his power to secure the utter extinction of the persecuted Camisards. He promised complete exemption from the pains of purgatory to all who took up arms to exterminate "the accursed and execrable race." For three years this cruel crusade continued, till the fair and fruitful hills and valleys of the Cevennes, were turned into desolation, and the Protestants completely crushed.

Time and space fail to tell the sickening and similar stories of the Papal persecutions in Spain and Portugal, in Savoy, in Poland, in Bohemia, and in the Thirty Years' War in Germany; the horrible persecutions of the Emperor Charles V., and above all of the dark deeds of the Papacy, wrought through the infamous Duke of Alva in the Low Countries. Let the thrilling story of the heroism of hundreds and thousands of Christian martyrs, as told in Motley's *Dutch Republic*, add its testimony to the fact, that the Papal power has fulfilled the inspired prediction, "he shall wear out the saints of the Most High," and "make war with the saints and overcome them"; let Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* do the same; let the records of the Lollard persecution in our own land, and of the reign of "bloody" Mary, do the

same; let Mexico, and Abyssinia, and India, tell their tales of the Holy Inquisition and its doings, and of the Jesuits and their proceedings; and let Italy itself unveil the scenes that Ferrara, and Venice, and Parma, and Calabria have witnessed, in confirmation of the fact. In the mouth of very many witnesses the charge is proved, and one single statement makes all argument on the subject needless. *It has been calculated that the Popes of Rome have, directly or indirectly, slain on account of their faith, fifty millions of martyrs; fifty millions of men and women who refused to be parties to Romish idolatries, who held to the Bible as the Word of God, and who loved not their lives unto death, but resisted unto blood, striving against sin.*

VI. DOMINION OF THE MAN OF SIN.

One of the most marked features of the great power of evil predicted in the four prophecies we are considering, is *its wide dominion*.

Of this revived head of the Roman earth we read (Rev. xiii. 7), "*power* was given him, over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations"; and other clauses in the chapter show that so absolute was this power to be, that all, small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, were to be brought into subjection to it, and that it would become almost impossible for those who refused such subjection to exist; they would not even be permitted to buy or sell.

A peculiar mark of the nature of this power is also given. The subjection yielded to it would be a *voluntary* one. It is said of the ten horns, that they shall "have one mind, and shall *give* their power and strength unto the Beast"; that is, it is predicted that the kingdoms into which the Roman earth would be divided, on the fall of the Empire, would *voluntarily*

place themselves, in some sense, under the dominion of this final form of Roman power. Their subjection would not be effected by conquest, but by the arts of persuasion and subtle influence. They would be deceived and cajoled into submission, by fair words, by false miracles, by lying wonders, by superstitious fears, and by the influence of others, acting on behalf of this power, rather than by its own direct efforts.

This feature is so peculiar, so unlike the analogous features of the three first Beasts or Empires of Daniel, whose dominion was acquired by devouring, pushing, running furiously, smiting, breaking, stamping in pieces, in a word, by exercising physical force, instead of subtle spiritual influence, that it serves at once to indicate the power intended. The Papacy is the only great political power which has ever held sway over all kindreds, tongues, and nations, without having to fight for it, and with the consent of the subjected kingdoms. The profound ignorance of the dark ages, so zealously fostered by the Papacy, created a degree of superstition which rendered kings and peoples alike willingly obedient to this power, which boldly claimed to be supernatural, and to exercise dominion in heaven and in hell, as well as on earth, and over the souls, as well as over the bodies of men; and that both for time and for eternity.

The prophecy further distinctly intimates that this power will not be universal or all-inclusive, even in the lands where it should prevail. It would be resisted by a certain class: "all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, *whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*" This foretells that the godly—"the saints"—the chosen and called and faithful, and they *alone*, will refuse to bow to this power; and the vision shows also

that they will do it at the *risk*, and too often at the cost of the *loss of*, life itself. How literally and fearfully this prediction has been fulfilled in the history of the Papacy, the preceding outline of the persecutions inflicted on so-called "heretics" shows.

The extent and the character of Papal dominion, during the dark ages, is, in our days, little realized.

The imperial edicts of the Emperors Justinian and Phocas gave the Popes of Rome a legal power in all religious matters; and very early the various Gothic princes of Western Christendom showed a disposition to yield submission to the Roman Pontiff, as children to a father, or inferiors to a superior. Already, in the eighth century, Gregory II. boasted to the Greek Emperor, "all the kings of the west reverence the Pope *as a God on earth*," and facts fully justified the assertion. Pepin, for example, when aspiring to the crown of France, prayed the Pope to authorize his usurpation; and as soon as he had done so, the Franks, and indeed the whole Western World, recognized his title. Even the great Emperor Charlemagne was willing to receive from the Roman Pontiff his crown and dominion. "The Lord John, apostolic and universal Pope," says the Council of Pavia, "hath at Rome *elected*, and anointed with the holy oil, Charlemagne as Emperor." The western kings of Europe accepted the position of subserviency to the Sovereign Pontiff, by admitting into their coronation oaths a promise, "to be faithful and submissive to the Popes, and the Roman Church."

In its earlier days the Papacy, restrained by princes from exercising civil dominion, was equally restrained by the independence of bishops, and the authority of councils, from assuming despotic power, even in the

Church. "From the time of Leo IX.," says Mosheim, "the Popes employed every method which the most artful ambition could suggest, to remove these limits, and to render their dominion both despotic and universal." Hildebrand, one of the most ambitious, sagacious, crafty, and arrogant of men, when he became Pope under the title of Gregory VII., "looked up to the summit of universal empire, with a wistful eye, and laboured up the ascent with uninterrupted ardour and invincible perseverance." He laboured indefatigably to render the universal Church subject to the despotic government of the Pontiff *alone*, as well as to submit to his jurisdiction the emperors, kings, and princes of the earth, and to render their dominion tributary to the See of Rome. Even when the Pope reclaimed a crown he had conferred, he was often met with the most abject submission. The Emperors Rodolphus and Otho, of Germany, not only received the crown as a Papal grant, on the Pope's deposition of previous emperors, but they resigned, at his bidding, the crowns so received. Peter II. of Arragon, and John, king of England, and other monarchs also, gave up their independence, that they might receive back their realms as *vassals of the Pope*. "Under the sacerdotal monarchy of St. Peter," says Gibbon, "the nations began to resume the practice of seeking on the banks of the Tiber their kings, their laws, and the oracles of their fate." And similarly, in speaking of the first Norman king of Sicily, he says, "The nine kings of the Latin world might disclaim their new associate, unless he were consecrated by the authority of the supreme Pontiff."

If kings and emperors bowed thus before the Pope, it will easily be believed that the reverence of the common people for his person and office, and their submission

to his arrogant and blasphemous pretensions, was complete. "Not in respect of his power in secular things, but in things much higher, who knows not of the universal reverence and faith in his blasphemous pretensions exhibited throughout the long Middle Ages by Christendom? Look at the thronging multitudes on pilgrimage to Rome, in assurance of the salvation he promises them! Look at their reception of his dogmas in matters of faith, as very oracles from Heaven! Look at their purchasing of his indulgences with their often hard-earned money, in the belief of delivering thereby the captive souls of departed relatives, as well as their own souls, from the pains of purgatory and of hell!"¹ Look at the way in which thousands of all classes engaged in crusades and religious wars at the bidding of the Popes, and refused aid, even to their nearest and dearest friends, if they came under his ban! From the most private domestic relations of individuals, to the most public national acts of empires, all fell under the rule, direct or indirect, of the Papacy. It was the last solemn united act, before the Reformation, of the deputies of Christendom assembled in council, to subscribe the Bull *Unam Sanctum*, which declares that *as there is but one body of the Church and Christendom, so there is but one head, the Vicar of Christ—the Pope; and that it is essential to the salvation of every human being, to be subject to the Roman Pontiff*; and no subsequent Council ever revoked this decree.

It is clear, then, that a widespread and all-pervading power, of the most despotic, absolute, and blasphemous character, *was* wielded for a thousand years by the Popes of Rome, and is claimed by them still; that this power was submitted to by all the nations of Western

¹ Elliott, *Horæ Apocalypticæ*.

Christendom for many centuries; and that it is still acknowledged by all Roman Catholics everywhere.

In the Papacy has therefore been fulfilled to the letter, and in the most marvellous way, the prediction, "Power was given unto him over all kindreds and tongues and nations."¹

VII. Before closing this chapter, we must notice the *doom* of the great power of evil predicted in the fourfold prophecy we are considering.

It consists of two parts, gradual consumption, followed by sudden and final destruction. The latter, being still future, affords no opportunity of comparing the prophetic announcement with the historical fulfilment; but the former, being already partially fulfilled, and still in progress of fulfilment, does; and the correspondence between prediction and event is nowhere more clear and unmistakable.

¹ The application of this prophecy to the Popedom has sometimes been doubted, because of the wide universality of this expression. But comparison with other Scriptures remove this difficulty. We read in Matthew iii. 5: "Then went out unto him Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized." And again, Acts ix. 35, "And all that dwelt in Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord." "All" in these passages must be taken with *limitations*, which are not expressed. So in Daniel iii. 7, it is said that when Nebuchadnezzar set up his image, "all the people, the nations, and the languages fell down and worshipped." Now the second verse of the chapter shows that only the princes and governors of those nations were *present*; they are regarded as *representatives* of their people. In the same way all Christendom submitted to the Popes of Rome, through the Councils which represented them. The exception in the text of those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life shows that—just as all were not Israel that were of Israel—so all were not Papists that were subject to the Papacy. This must never be forgotten. At the last the cry goes forth, "Come out of her, *my people*," a call which implies that—as Lot dwelt in Sodom—so some true believers will be found in the Roman Catholic system, even just prior to its final destruction.

In *Daniel*, in *Thessalonians*, and in the *Apocalypse*, the final destruction of this last form of the Roman power, is connected with the personal appearing of Christ to establish His Millennial kingdom. But in each prophecy it is also intimated that a consuming and destroying process would go on for some time, *previously* to the end, so that the once mighty power would be weakened and impoverished, before it is finally destroyed.

"They shall take away his dominion, to *consume* and destroy it unto the end" (Dan. vii. 26). "Whom the Lord shall *consume* with the Spirit of His mouth, and *destroy* with the brightness of His coming" (2 Thess. ii. 8). "The ten horns shall hate the whore, and shall *make her desolate and naked*, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire" (Rev. xvii. 16).

The final destruction of the power in question is described in Revelation xix. 20, "The beast was taken and cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." This is his *destruction* with the brightness of Christ's coming; and the *consumption* by the spirit of His mouth must have preceded this final judgment.

Pharaoh and the hosts of Egypt were similarly wasted and consumed by the ten plagues, before they were overthrown in the waters of the Red Sea. The consuming process is figured in the *Apocalypse* as taking place under the outpouring of certain vials of wrath on the kingdom of the Beast, and on his followers.

We inquire, then, whether there have been in the history of the Papacy any events answering to this emblem, whether any process of *consumption* is distinctly traceable, any wasting to decay of its resources, any conspicuous diminution of its dominion, and reduction of its influence and authority.

The facts of the case are so notorious that it is

needless to set them forth in detail. The political power of the Roman Pontiffs, once, as we have seen, a dread reality in Europe, is gone. The territorial possessions of the Pope are gone; the States of the Church form part of the dominions of the king of Italy, and Rome itself has become his capital. Within recent years all the Concordats made between the Pope and the various countries of Europe, have been brought to an end. In 1513, when the great Lateran Council was held, there was not a "heretic" to be found. There are now nearly eighty millions of Protestants, who abjure Papal doctrines and practices. The dominion of the Popes, over the bodies and minds of men, is therefore marvellously diminished, though the latter is not yet destroyed.

And it is specially worthy of note that the means by which this "consumption" of Papal power has been accomplished are precisely the means specified by the Apostle Paul in Thessalonians. He says that the Lord shall consume this evil power *by the spirit of His mouth*, that is, by His Word.

Holy Scripture is, of course, the form in which the Word, or spirit of the Lord's mouth, influences human society.

The Creed of Pius IV.—that creed, a belief in which is, according to Papal declaration, essential to salvation—expressly states that the Bible is not for the people: "Whosoever will be saved," must *renounce* it. It is a forbidden book. Bible Societies are "Satanic contrivances." Bible burnings are most Catholic demonstrations. All this dread of Scripture, all this violent opposition to its circulation, is a plain proof that *the Papacy recognizes in the Word of God its worst antagonist*. Experience shows it is right.

Wherever the Word of God has free course, the power

of the Papacy is at an end. The Reformation sprang from a recovered Bible; and wherever, as in Scotland, the popular mind is imbued with Scripture, Romanism has no chance. It is the absence of Bible knowledge that enables the Papacy to retain its sway, in Spain and other European countries, in Mexico, in Brazil, and in parts of Ireland.

For the last three hundred years, ever since the Reformation, the Papacy has been in process of consumption by the spirit of the Lord's mouth. It will ere long be "destroyed by the brightness of His coming."

VIII. This leads us to the last point we must notice in our examination of this remarkable fourfold prophecy of the Papacy,—*its duration*.

The period of the dominion of the little horn is fixed in Daniel vii. as "time, times, and the dividing of time"; and that of the last head of the Roman beast (which is, as we have seen, only another symbol of the same power), as "forty and two months," the same period under a different designation. This period is identical, and synchronous with, the 1260 days of parallel prophecies. Interpreted according to the year-day system, it has had a most evident fulfilment in the duration of the power of the Papacy; and it is besides *a key to the whole system of times and seasons, natural and revealed*.

To enter more largely on this point here would be to anticipate subsequent chapters. For the present we must content ourselves with asserting simply that the *predicted period* of the great power of evil we have been considering, 1260 years, points out the Papacy as the proper fulfilment, as clearly as any of the other features. The Bishops of Rome assumed universal supremacy in the beginning of the seventh century, and have exercised it ever since. It is a solemn fact, that these inspired

prophecies,—every other prediction in which has been so marvellously fulfilled,—foretell that it will not last much longer. Its end is near.

To conclude. The origin of the Papacy corresponded with every indication furnished by these four prophecies. Its character answers exactly to the singularly wicked and evil character assigned by the inspiring Spirit to the predicted power. Self-exalting utterances, great words against God and man, have been one of its most distinguishing features; idolatries and false doctrines have been inculcated and promulgated throughout Christendom by its instrumentality; it has made war with the saints and overcome them, fifty millions of evangelical martyrs having been slain by its authority; it has ruled over all the kindreds and nations of Catholic Christendom, and that for more than twelve centuries; and it has for the last three hundred years been wasting to decay, undermined and exposed by the Reformation movement, which itself was the direct result of the revival of spiritual teachings and the dissemination of Bible truth. According to the Divine programme afforded by these sacred, once mysterious but now clear predictions, the Papal drama is played out. The final scene alone remains,—the destruction of the Papacy by the brightness of Christ's Coming.

When the four symbolic beasts were presented to Daniel, it was *the fourth* that arrested his gaze, and it was the "little horn" of that fourth empire that mainly attracted his attention, and the angelic interpreter dwells with tenfold fullness on the power represented by this symbol. So when Paul predicted the future of the Church on earth, it was the rise, domination, and decay of this same evil power that he presented, as the main event to intervene before her rapture to meet the Lord

in the air; and so when John received the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to him, the central symbol of the entire group of symbols, the one which occupied the most prominent place in the prophecy, was one of this same power, "the beast," the great antagonist of the Lamb and His followers.

How worthy of such conspicuous mention in the sacred oracles, of such solemn denunciation by the Holy Ghost,—how worthy of such pre-eminent fame (or rather infamy!) among the gigantic evils that have afflicted mankind,—how deserving of every dark designation bestowed, and of the dread doom denounced, has the Papacy proved itself to be. The self-styled Vicar of Christ has been His worst enemy in the world, the crowned priest on the Papal throne has been the undoing of the Church on earth. The system which asserts salvation impossible beyond its borders has destroyed the spiritual and temporal well-being of untold multitudes of men, and has filled Catholic Christendom with scorners, infidels, and atheists.

As to every single particular noted in the sure word of prophecy, the plainest correspondence can be traced between the fourfold prediction and the Papal fulfilment; and we cannot refrain from deprecating most earnestly the mischievous system of interpretation, which teaches that this clear, undeniable, and grandly terrible accomplishment *is not the fulfilment intended*.

Standing face to face with Jesus Christ, the disciples of John inquired in their Master's name, "Art Thou He that should come, or look we for another?" They were answered by deeds, not words. The Lord wrought Messianic miracles in their presence, and said, "Go and tell John what things ye have seen and heard"; that is, *He did the deeds which it had been predicted that the*

Messiah would do, and all were responsible to draw thence the inference *that He was the Messiah*. So, pointing to the Church history of the last twelve centuries, we say,—the Papacy has done the deeds which were to be done by the oft-predicted power of evil foretold in the word of God! And we believe that Christians are responsible to draw from the historical fact the inference, *that the Papacy is the power that was thus predicted*.

Not for one, but for fifty generations of saints, were these prophecies indited; not to be fulfilled on the petty scale of three years, but on the majestic one of twelve centuries; not to indicate gross material dangers, but subtle spiritual and ecclesiastical evils of long duration, and world-wide prevalence. The coming of Antichrist is no brief future event, lying between us and our blessed hope, the glorious appearing of our Saviour; he was revealed more than a thousand years ago, he has run his course, and lasted his appointed period; for three hundred years he has been consuming by the spirit of Christ's mouth, and of all the momentous series of events connected with his long-predicted career, nothing remains to be fulfilled save his final conflict with the Lamb, and destruction with the brightness of Christ's Coming.

The correct interpretation of the prophecy of Babylon the great,—that it is the Church of Rome—confirms the above view of this prophecy of "the beast," and is indeed the key to the whole Apocalypse.

There is a vast difference between the Papacy, and the corrupt Church, which it founded, governed, and used as its tool; a difference, less in degree, but similar in character, to that existing between the Head of the true Church, and that Church which He founded, governs, and employs as an instrument to accomplish His will in

the world. Many things are true of the Lord Jesus, that are not true of the Church which is His body, close and inseparable as is the connection between them. So, many things are true of the Popes of Rome which are not true of the Roman Catholic Church, close as is the connection between *them*. Widely different symbols are selected to prefigure the two in the Apocalypse, and yet the connection between them is very clearly indicated; they are never confounded, yet never disjoined.

Now the duration of the corrupt Church is not mentioned in this prophecy, though long duration is implied; but her *name* is given, and it demonstrates with all but mathematical certainty, as we have seen, that the Church intended is the *Church of Rome*. That Church has already lasted, in a condition of corruption and apostasy, for more than twelve centuries. Its *fall* is in the Apocalypse represented as taking place under the *seventh* Vial (Rev. xvi.), and as synchronizing with the Marriage of the Lamb (Rev. xix. 1-4).

The power of "the beast" (or Papal dynasty) is also represented as being consumed under the outpouring of the Vials, while he himself and his armies are destroyed by the Advent, which synchronizes with the Marriage of the Lamb. That is, "Babylon" and "the beast" are represented as *coming to an end at one and the same time*.

Their careers are also cotemporaneous, for the woman is represented as *seated on* the Roman beast—"the beast that was and is not"—that is, not old Pagan Rome, but Rome *revived*, in a totally new form of domination. This beast "that was and is not" is expressly said to be the *eighth* (v. 11), that is, the *last* terrible form of revived Roman power, so fully described in chapter xiii.—the power of which we have been treating.

It follows, that since the Church of Rome has already lasted more than twelve centuries, the last ruling head of the Roman world, the blasphemous, persecuting, self-exalting head or power here predicted, *must have been in existence for the very same period*, which is indeed the duration assigned to it, in symbolic language by the prophecy—1260 years.

Now *what power* has actually ruled the nations of Christendom from Rome as its seat, during the last twelve centuries? There can be but one reply—*The Papacy: It must therefore be the power prefigured by the symbol of "the beast."*

Further, the Vials, under which Babylon and "the beast" are represented as being brought to an end, synchronize with the close of the period of the Trumpets. The events prefigured under the *earlier* Trumpets must therefore be sought in the previous history of Christendom; that is, in the time of the *undiminished* power of the Papacy, and in the events which preceded and accompanied its *rise*.

The martyrs represented in chapter xv., standing as victors on the sea of glass, having "*gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over the number of his name,*" must be those slain by Papal Rome. A previous group of martyrs are represented in chapter vi., who must therefore be those slain by Pagan Rome in the ten great persecutions of the Church by the Cæsars.

Now it is under the *fifth Seal* that this earlier company is seen under the altar, and consequently the events figured as taking place under the four *previous* Seals must be sought in days *prior to the last great persecution under Diocletian*, that is, in the first three hundred years of Church history.

Thus we are led, by clear and simple synchronisms afforded by the book itself, to a conclusion respecting the Apocalypse, similar to that which we reached by other lines of argument; namely, that its fulfilment is to be sought in the events of the Christian era, and that so far from all its visions, from chapter vi. to chapter xix., being still wholly *future*, they are almost wholly *past*. Nor can the force of this argument be avoided, save by denying that the Babylon of the Apocalypse represents the Church of Rome.

In the remaining portion of this work, we shall find all the conclusions we have reached in its three earlier parts, respecting the second Advent and the Millennium, the resurrection and the judgment to come, the true scope and nature of the Apocalypse, and the signification of these, its two leading prefigurations,—abundantly confirmed from independent sources, and by arguments drawn from the realms of natural science.

PART IV

INQUIRY INTO THE DIVINE SYSTEM
OF TIMES AND SEASONS, NATURAL
AND REVEALED

CHAPTER I

CHRONOLOGY, BIBLICAL AND NATURAL

OUR subject in this volume, so far, has been sacred prophecy. We have observed the manner in which the Omniscient God has been pleased to reveal the future to man—progressively; we have investigated some of the main principles on which the symbolic predictions of Scripture should be interpreted; and we have traced the historic fulfilment of two of the most important of them. We must now turn to the distinct yet cognate subject of Chronology, and examine *the times and seasons* of some of the events foretold in prophecy, and those of Scripture in general.

Every Bible student is aware that prophecy has its chronology, that various *periods* are assigned to events foretold by holy men of old, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Empires have their duration, dynasties and kingdoms last for certain periods; and as predicting these, prophecy can no more be divested of the chronological element than history. Indeed prophecy being simply history anticipated, the times and seasons of the one become in due course those of the other; they are two parts of one whole; and now that history unrolls before our eyes a record extending over six thousand years, there are very few prophetic periods whose fulfilment cannot be traced in some part of the scroll.

But further; there exists, not in sacred prophecy alone, but throughout the entire Bible, a *system* of times and seasons. Chronology is a prominent feature of the Holy Scriptures. In the account of the Creation, in the narrative of the Flood, in the biographies of the patriarchs, in the Mosaic economy with its legal and ceremonial enactments, in the history of the Jewish nation; in the prophets, in the Gospels, and in the Apocalypse—statements of *time* abound. Not only are there chronological statements in abundance in the Bible, but there is, underlying them all, a system, a peculiar system, harmonious with all the other features of that marvellous volume.

A moment's reflection will satisfy every well-informed person that *nature* has also its times and seasons; that the outward material universe in which we dwell, and the laws which govern it, are marked by a well-defined *periodicity*. The entire solar system is one great chronometer, the animal and vegetable worlds are regulated by unchangeable laws in respect of *time*, as well as in every other respect; and nature being a revelation of its great Creator's wisdom and power, the system of times and seasons which characterizes it, may be called a *Divine system of times and seasons*.

Now if there be a system of times and seasons, in nature, which is *unquestionably* from God, and a system also in the Bible, which *claims* to be a Divine revelation, it is evidently an inquiry of the deepest interest, *are these two systems one?* Can any principles or peculiarities be observed, which indicate that the two are the offspring of one and the same mind?

The importance of such an investigation will scarcely be questioned. In these days of supercilious scientific contempt for Scripture, we can ill afford to leave unem-

ployed any single line of evidence, which may strengthen the argument for the Divine origin of the Bible. To demonstrate *this* is to enable Christianity to dispense with other evidence, for if Scripture be from God, Christianity is unquestionably true. Now if Bible times and seasons harmonize with the system by which the entire universe is regulated, he will be a most uncandid and unscientific sceptic, who refuses to believe that Scripture is from God. The harmony once proved, will demand a modification of many a theory of unbelief, and to account for it will tax the ingenuity of infidels.

In the following pages it will be our endeavour to show briefly that the natural and Biblical systems are one—two parts of one whole,—and may the proof redound to the glory of God, and confirm the faith of His servants in the inspiration of His Holy Word.

In investigating the question of times and seasons, we will commence by considering the almost boundless dominion exercised by the sun and moon over the inorganic and organic worlds, and we will then advance to the subject of the periodicity of their movements, and the relation of these and other natural times and seasons, to those revealed in the Word of God.

SOLAR AND LUNAR DOMINION

The inspired writings were never intended to reveal to men those truths of science which their own God-given intelligence would ultimately enable them to discover. Yet the Scriptures never darken counsel by words without knowledge, involving scientific blunders, and they often use, in a passing way, expressions which harmonize with the teachings of the most advanced modern science.

The statement that God made the sun and moon "*to rule*," is one of these. To rise to a conception of the universality of solar influence in connection with inorganic and organic terrestrial change, is difficult for us even now, and must have been impossible for the ancients.

Yet that this great light of our globe is also its great ruler, is beyond all question, and is a point we must seek to establish, before we endeavour to unfold some of the chronological laws of this dominion.

So numerous and important are the effects which Almighty Power accomplishes through solar and lunar agency, that *the sun and moon may be said to drive the whole clockwork of terrestrial nature*. The swift and ceaseless movement of the earth through space; the curving of its path and its retention in an annual orbit; the slow secular alteration of the direction of its axis; the periodic donation and withdrawal of various degrees of light and heat, with resulting days, and nights, and changeful seasons; the movement and circulation of all winds; the circulation of all water currents; the whole phenomena of tides, and of rain and dew, of snow and hail; these, together with the constant exercise of the most potent of all physical influences, in the development and support of vegetable and animal life, constitute a sum of solar and lunar operations, which seems to leave but little to be effected by other agencies.

The permanence of seed-time and harvest, day and night, cold and heat, has been promised by the sure word of a gracious and bountiful Creator, and the accomplishment of that promise is effected by the permanence and stability of the earth's relations with the sun. These may slightly vary in the course of the prolonged secular changes discovered by astronomic

observation ; but compensating powers exist which keep these changes within very narrow limits, and provide for the maintenance of equilibrium, thus securing that uniformity of solar influence which is needful for the continuation of terrestrial life.

The inclination of the axis of the earth to the plane of her orbit, for instance, is at present undergoing a steady, though very slow diminution. Were this to continue unchecked, or to accelerate, a time must come sooner or later, when the equator and the ecliptic would coincide, and thus destroy the present succession of the seasons.

But this catastrophe will never happen ; the all-wise Creator has provided for a continuance of the works of His hands. Before the movement of the earth's axis in this direction can produce any perceptible results, in changing the climate of any part of the globe, it will cease. The axis will, under fresh influences, remain steady for a time, and then commence a retrograde movement, which will restore it to its original position. It will thus oscillate to and fro in the ages to come, without ever deranging to the slightest extent the climate of the various parts of the earth.

The sun and moon control the movements of this globe, and so produce our times and seasons. The periods measured by their simple primary revolutions we call days, months, and years, and our ordinary computation of time is by fractions or multiples of these ; while their secular motions provide for the measurement of longer periods of time.

The periods resulting from combined solar and lunar movements must therefore, in the investigation of the world's chronology, be allowed to have a place of paramount importance. To ignore them, is to ignore the

clue to the complex labyrinth; while patiently and consistently to employ them, is to follow the guidance granted by the great Creator, through the phenomena of creation,—the only way of attaining scientific truth.

THE LAW OF WEEKS

It is evident that the hand of the Creator has regulated a variety of vital phenomena by a *law of weeks*: that a septiform periodicity has been, by God Himself, impressed upon Nature.

The Holy Scriptures claim to be a revelation from the God of nature, and an orderly and consistent system of chronology is one marked feature of the sacred volume. *Now it is a most noteworthy and indisputable fact, that this system is, from first to last, a system of weeks: septiform periodicity is stamped upon the Bible, as conspicuously, and even more so than on nature.*

The Levitical chronology was a system of weeks on various scales of magnitude; one which employed the main natural divisions of time,—the day, month, and year,—as units for its weeks, and these as units for still larger septiform periods. And as the complete chronology of the typical *law* foreshadowed the wonderful history of redemption, so the chronology of Old and New Testament *prophecy* has reference to the same: for prophecy is only history anticipated as types are history foreshown in action. But the views of history given in divinely inspired prophecy are wider, and more comprehensive, than can be found elsewhere; and therefore in prophetic chronology we find periods of vaster scope,—plainly foretold, or obscurely intimated,—and above all, a key to the whole plan of history. In prophetic chronology, we trace the same system as in

Levitical; it consists of *a series of weeks*. The legal week of seven years, the week whose unit is a solar year, is multiplied tenfold (70 years) and seventy-fold (490 years); and on the same principle, only on a higher scale, the year which had been previously employed as the unit of a week, is now employed as the *unit of a year*; this is the *year-day system* of symbolic prophecy.

Weeks of such years are appointed as the measures of vast periods of history,—the Patriarchal, Jewish, and Christian dispensations,—distinguished one from the other by moral features, and by varied degrees of Divine revelation.

In all these different departments of Scripture, we shall find a uniform plan—*the week* reigns supreme; it measures alike the briefest and the longest periods, and can be traced in various forms, in the Law, in the Prophets, and in the Gospel. It runs like a golden thread through the entire texture of the Bible; and this fact alone proves a *unity of design*, pervading this collection of the writings of about forty different authors of various lands and ages, which argues it the product of one inspiring mind,—the mind of the great Creator. On the world His hands have fashioned, and on the Word His Spirit has inspired, He has stamped, in equally indelible characters, *the week*, as a divinely selected measure of human time.

In connection with the first appearance of the week—on the opening page of Scripture, in the narrative of the creation,—we find an exposition of its profound meaning, the moral object and end of God in its selection. It is the period that leads up to, and terminates in, the *rest of God*. We read, “On the seventh day God ended His work which He had made, and He rested on

the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because that in it He had rested from all His work, which God created and made." The same reason is assigned for the observance of the Sabbath. In the law given at Sinai: "Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, . . . for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it" (Ex. xx.).

The Hebrew word translated "week" means *seven*, and would designate any period composed of *seven shorter periods*, whether days, weeks, years, decades, centuries, millenaries, or any other unit. The following were the various weeks, appointed under the Jewish ritual for perpetual observance in Israel:—

1. The week of days. Gen. ii. 2, 3; Ex. xx.
2. The week of weeks. Pentecost. Lev. xxiii.
3. The week of months. The Jewish sacred year. Lev. xxiii.
4. The week of years. The Sabbatic year. Lev. xxv.
5. The week of weeks of years. The Jubilee. Lev. xxv.

THE WEEK IN HISTORY

The Bible is the only book in the world that gives us a view of human history as a whole, that carries us from the lost Paradise of Eden to the restored Paradise of the Apocalypse, tracing the course of the human race through every stage of its intermediate existence on earth, and on beyond the limits of time into the boundless regions of eternity.

In it alone therefore are we likely to find the key, if key there be, to the periodicity of history,—the underlying principle bringing the inharmonious periods, which the annals of the human race at first sight present, into harmony with each other, and with the periods of nature and of revealed religion.

The histories of Scripture reach back to the farthest past, and its prophecies extend to the most distant future; taken together as they are presented in the Bible, the two afford a panoramic view of the whole course of events, from the creation and fall of man, to the final judgment, and the inauguration of the new heavens and the new earth.

The Bible is therefore the chart of all history; and it gives us, not events only, but their moral character, tracing the motives that influenced the various actors in the drama, as well as the results of their action. Events are shown in connection with their causes and their effects, and the judgment of God as to their character is revealed. Without the Bible, history would be a spectacle of “rivers flowing from unknown sources, to unknown seas”; but under its guidance we can trace the complex currents to their springs, and see the end from the beginning.

The entire story of mankind as presented in Scripture being composed of two parts, the historic and the prophetic, it is clear that the periods into which the history of man as a whole is divided, cannot be discerned, without taking both historic and prophetic *chronology* into account.

OLD TESTAMENT CHRONOLOGY

The highest point of antiquity to which authentic profane history carries us is the occupation of Babylon

by an army of Medes in 2233 B.C., that is, about 250 years after the Flood.¹

For our knowledge of the dates of all previous events, we are indebted exclusively to the Hebrew Scriptures.

The whole period from Adam to Christ may be traced step by step from Scripture statements. We meet indeed two breaks in the chain, two brief chasms, which no ingenuity can bridge over. They have been allowed to occur, in the wisdom of God, for some good and sufficient reason; and the result is that it is impossible to accurately ascertain the exact period that has elapsed since the creation of Adam.

1. We are not informed what was the duration of the government of Joshua and the elders, and of the inter-regnum or anarchy which followed. The interval between the death of Moses, and servitude under the Midianites, can from Scripture statements be calculated with tolerable certainty, but not with actual precision. The years assigned to it must rest more or less on conjecture. It is the period spoken of in Joshua xxiv. 31: "Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, which had known all the works of the Lord that He had done for Israel." Joshua was probably about the same age as Caleb, forty, at the time of the spies; he wandered with Israel in the wilderness for thirty-eight years before he took command of their armies on the death of Moses. He was therefore about seventy-eight when his government began, and was 110 at his death (Josh. xxiv. 29), so that the above expression, "all the days of Joshua," must apparently include about thirty-two years; it is impossible to fix the period more closely, and it may well

¹ Clinton, *Fasti Hellenici*, p. 296.

vary ten years in either direction. Clinton puts it at twenty-seven years.

2. The second chasm occurs between the death of Samson and the election of Saul, and was occupied by the governments of Eli and Samuel. Josephus makes this interval fifty-two years. Clinton, for reasons which appear satisfactory, considers that the nearest approximation to the truth which Scripture statements permit, is thirty-two years.¹

We have not space to enlarge on the point, as our object in alluding here to these chronological chasms is less to investigate their limits, than to show that *those limits are very narrow*. From forty to sixty years comprises, in all probability, the limit of uncertainty, in the whole extent of Bible chronology.

PROPHETIC CHRONOLOGY

We turn now from the past to the future, to gather from the inspired Word of God its prophetic revelations of the chronology of the closing events of the history of the world.

From the earliest days, statements of time have been an important element in Divine predictions. The 120 years that should elapse before the Flood, the 400 years' affliction of Abraham's seed, the 40 years in the wilderness, the 70 years of Babylonish captivity,—these and other periods were announced beforehand. And similarly, in the New Testament, the Lord Jesus Christ foretold the period during which He would bow to the power of the grave. These and other predictions, given simply to reveal the future, are accompanied by plain, literal, statements of time. But there is another series of pre-

¹ *Fasti Hellenici*, pp. 304-320.

dictions, in which a *double object* may be distinctly traced, to reveal and yet to *conceal* the future.

God's foreknowledge is one of His highest attributes. His people are comforted, and their faith is strengthened, when they find that the experiences through which they are passing, the troubles that are befalling them, have been foreseen and foretold by God. But there are some things which it is better for God's people not to know beforehand ; as, for instance, the true length of the present period of the absence of Christ from His Church. Divine wisdom and love judged it best, as we have seen, to conceal from the early Church the foreordained duration of this Christian age, and to allow every generation of Christians to live in the expectation of the speedy return of their Lord. "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world." He, of course, knew that over eighteen centuries would elapse before the second Coming of Christ, and could have revealed this in plain words to the Church. He did not do so, as is proved by the fact that the early generations of Christians expected the return of Christ in their own day. If then God wished to reveal *the events* of this period, without revealing *its duration*, He must needs adopt a style of prediction, which would reveal while concealing, and conceal while revealing, the truth.

This is exactly what He has done. The revelations granted to Daniel and John, relating to the events of this dispensation, are not couched in ordinary language, or made in plain terms, which admit of no second meaning. They are embodied in mysterious symbolic forms, which require to be translated before they can be understood. They are not incomprehensible ; very far from that ! Incomprehensible prophecy could answer no conceivable object. But prophecy which would be

obscure for a time, and clear only after the lapse of ages, would answer the object supposed above, of concealing from one generation that which it would not be desirable for it to know, while revealing it to a succeeding one, to which the knowledge was indispensable. Now as statements of time occur in connection with these symbolic prophecies, as well as in connection with plain predictions, the question arises, are these statements to be taken in a literal or in a figurative sense? Does a day mean a day, or does it in these prophecies mean a year? Does a year mean a year, or does it mean 360 years. Does "a thousand two hundred and threescore days" mean a period of three and a half years, or does it mean a period of 1260 of our years?

It is evident that a consideration of the periodicity of history in its widest extent, including the revealed *future* of man, as well as his *past*, requires a *previous investigation of this question*, since it is vital to the subject. Before we can discern their mutual proportions and relations, we must understand what all the periods with which we have to deal *really are*. We must no more omit future periods than past ones, and must know the true length of the former, as well as of the latter. We must take *all* the portions of the dissected map into account, before we can even form a hypothesis as to its true configuration and dimensions, or discern the plan on which it has been divided. We must bear in mind for instance not only that the patriarchal and Jewish ages have *preceded* our own, but that Scripture foretells a millennial age to *succeed* it. We must be aware not merely that the Babylonish captivity lasted seventy years, but that the dominion of a certain power symbolized by "the little horn" was fixed at "time, times, and half a time," and we must know what period is meant

by this strange unusual description. In a word, we must not only take into account the prophecies of Daniel and John, but we must seek to ascertain the sense in which their chronological statements are to be understood.

A moment's reflection will show the great importance of this investigation, not only to our present subject, but to a right understanding of the prophecies themselves.

The *duration assigned* to the events and powers represented by these symbols must evidently determine, to a large extent, our opinion as to what the symbols *themselves* signify. The "little horn" is to exercise dominion for "time, times, and the dividing of time," three years and a half. Now if these are literal years, the power predicted may be an individual, a personal Antichrist, as the Futurists assert; but if on the other hand it is symbolic language, signifying a period extending over twelve centuries, then the power predicted must needs be some *dynasty of rulers*, some succession of potentates, seeing no one man could live during so long a period. The chronology of these prophecies once made clear, research into their meaning becomes comparatively simple. On every account then the subject demands the earnest attention of those who desire to understand the oracles of God; and even if it be not so attractive as some others, it must not be lightly passed over. We may say of *it*, what Mr. Birks says of his exposition of the two later visions of Daniel, "from the nature of the details of which it is composed, it may perhaps fail to interest general readers. But those who study it will find themselves repaid, by a more deep and lively sense than ever of the actual Providence of the Almighty in this fallen world. Why have we, in the

Word of God itself, so many genealogies and lists of names, of offerings of the princes, of journeys in the wilderness, and other passages that seem dry and barren,—but to teach us, that we *must stoop to details and individual names*, if we would rightly understand the condescension of our God, and the reality of His special oversight of the children of men? Those who are soon weary of these details must pay the cost of their own impatient spirit, by a more loose, unreal and slippery faith. *The tree of faith must throw out ten thousand little roots into the lowly soil of prophetic history, if it is to grow and expand into that noble confidence of hope which no storms of temptation can uproot or destroy.* Here we have to deal with numbers and periods instead of with names, but these are perhaps even more unattractive to most people, as involving the mental effort of calculation; but we venture to assert that those who take the trouble to follow the investigation of this chapter, Bible in hand, will not fail to be at the close more profoundly convinced than ever before of the inspiration of the sacred volume, of the all-embracing providence and foreknowledge of God, and of the near approach of the “end of the age.”

On the judgment which we form as to the true meaning of the statements of time in symbolic chronological prophecy, depends also, we believe, to a great extent, the liveliness of our expectation of the Lord's speedy return. “That entire rejection of all prophetic chronology, which follows, of course, on the denial of the year-day, is most of all to be deplored, from its deadly and paralysing influence on the great hope of the Church. No delusion can be greater than to expect, by excluding all reference to dates and times, to awaken Christians to a more lively expectation of their Lord's

second Coming. For, in truth, without reference to such dates, in an open or disguised form, not one solid reason can be given why the Church may not still have to wait two or three thousand years, before the promise is fulfilled. The declarations 'the time is at hand,' were true and pertinent, when the event was eighteen centuries removed. And hence they form no barrier to the supposition that eighteen centuries more may still have to intervene. Every sign of the times is either too vague to direct us; or in proportion as it becomes distinct, assumes practically all the characters of a numerical date, and becomes exposed to the same objections. The prophetic times, indeed, when separated from the context, and viewed in themselves only, are a dry and worthless skeleton: but when taken in connection with the related events, clothed with historical facts, and joined with those spiritual affections which should attend the study of God's providence, like the bones in the human frame, they give strength to what was feeble, and union to what was disjointed, and form, and beauty, and order, to the whole outline and substance of these sacred and Divine prophecies."

CHAPTER II

THE YEAR-DAY SYSTEM

THE questions which we have to investigate are these. Are we to take the statements of times and periods which occur in the visions of Daniel and St. John as literal, or as symbolic? And if the latter, on what principle are we to translate them into plain language? We are not speaking of prophetic periods *in general*, but only of those which occur in these visions, and relate mainly to the events of this dispensation.

The times and periods in question are the following:—

IN DANIEL

1. That of the domination of the *Little Horn*: Dan. vii. 25.
2. That of the desolation of the *Sanctuary*: Dan. viii. 14.
3. The time to *Messiah the Prince*: Dan. ix. 24.
4. Time, times, and a half: Dan. xii. 7.
5. A period of 1290 days: Dan. xii. 11.
6. A period of 1335 days: Dan. xii. 12.

IN THE APOCALYPSE

1. The ten days' tribulation, at Smyrna: Rev. ii. 10.
2. The duration of the scorpion torment: Rev. ix. 5.

3. The career of the Euphratean horsemen: Rev. ix. 15.

4. The time of down-treading of the Holy City: Rev. xi. 2.

5. That of the prophesying of the Witnesses: Rev. xi. 3.

6. The time they lay unburied: Rev. xi. 9.

7. The sojourn of the Woman in the wilderness: Rev. xii. 6, 14.

8. The period of the domination of the Beast: Rev. xiii. 6.

We believe that in each of the above fourteen instances the period of time mentioned is *a symbol of another and a larger period*: and we proceed to give our reasons for this opinion.

If a geographer represents the surface of the globe on a sheet of paper, he must do so *on a miniature scale*: and to that scale he must adhere throughout.

The symbolic prophecies of Daniel and John are of this character; they are *miniature representations*.

Now it would be to impeach Divine wisdom to suppose that God has, in these miniature symbols, violated the laws of proportionate reduction. *Every feature* is therefore on a reduced scale; and *among the rest, the chronology*. The statement of time must, like the prophecy in which it occurs, be a symbolic miniature, intended to convey a reality immensely greater than itself.

There are mentioned $3\frac{1}{2}$ days, 10 days, 1260 days, and 1335 days: a half-week, a week, seven weeks, sixty-two weeks, and seventy weeks: a "day, month, and year": and "time, times, and a half."

In order to be intelligible, these measures of time must all be interpreted *on one scale*. What scale is it?

The answer to this question is found in the fact that one of these periods *has been fulfilled*, and supplies the key to all the rest. The "seventy weeks" of Daniel ix. elapsed between the decree of Artaxerxes and the Advent of Messiah. That period was actually 490 *years*: the prophecy announced it as 490 *days*; and we are therefore led to conclude that in all the above instances, where time is predicted in miniature, *a year is represented by a day*.

The principle once admitted, the chronology of these prophecies becomes simple and accurate. The plan of times and seasons is seen to be marvellous in its comprehensiveness, and in its harmony with other Scripture, and with Nature. But if this system is rejected, the chronology of prophecy becomes a strangely unmeaning thing, and these harmonies disappear. We look in vain for indications of Divine wisdom in the plan of the ages.

And yet this natural, scriptural "year-day" system of interpreting the mysterious times connected with the symbolic prophecies has been strongly opposed by Futurists. They maintain that statements of time should be taken *as literally* in Daniel and John as in Genesis and Exodus;—should be regarded as having precisely the same force, when connected with miniature symbols, as when associated with the plainest literal predictions.

We believe the Futurist view to be an erroneous and mischievous one; it precludes any adequate conception of the majestic range of the predictions of Scripture; it deprives the Church of the guidance of Divine prophecy as to the character and doom of the great apostasy, and of the stimulus to faith and hope afforded by the true interpretation. We must therefore be excused for dwelling a little more at length on the subject.

"The year-day theory," says Professor Birks, in his exhaustive and masterly treatise,¹ "may be summed up in these maxims:—

"1. That the Church, after the ascension of Christ, was intended of God to be kept in the lively expectation of His speedy return in glory.

"2. That, in the Divine counsels, a long period of nearly two thousand years was to intervene between the first and the second Advent, and to be marked by a dispensation of grace to the Gentiles.

"3. That, in order to strengthen the faith and hope of the Church under the long delay, a large part of the whole interval was prophetically announced, but in such a manner that its true length might not be understood, till its own close seemed to be drawing near.

"4. That, in the symbolic prophecies of Daniel and St. John, other times were revealed along with this, and included in one common maxim of interpretation.

"5. That the periods thus figuratively revealed are exclusively those of Daniel and St. John, which relate to the general history of the Church between the time of the prophet and the second Advent.

"6. That, in these predictions, each day represents a natural year, as in the vision of Ezekiel; that a month denotes *thirty*, and a time or year, *three hundred and sixty years*.

"The first of these maxims is plain from the statements of Scripture; and the second from the actual history of the world. The third is, on *à priori* grounds, a natural and reasonable inference from the two former, and is the true basis of the year-day theory viewed in its final cause. The three following present the theory itself, under its true limits. Perhaps no simpler method

¹ *First Elements of Sacred Prophecy*, p. 311.

could be suggested in which such a partial and half-veiled revelation could be made, than that which the Holy Spirit is thus supposed to adopt, resting as it does on one plain analogy of natural times.

"Now the mere statement of these axioms removes at once several main difficulties, which have been used to perplex and embarrass the inquiry.

"1. First, it has been urged that this larger interpretation of the prophetic times is inconsistent with the repeated commands of our Saviour, that the Church should always be watching for His return. How could this be possible, it is asked, if it were revealed from the first that 1260 years must elapse before that Advent should arrive?

"The objection disappears in a moment, when the *facts* and the *hypothesis* are simply compared together. The very reason for which the times are asserted to have been given in this unusual form is, that they might *not* be understood too early, when they would have interfered with the earnestness of continual expectation. The only way of sustaining this objection is to assume that the fact of such a revelation being given made it the duty of the Church to understand *at once* its true meaning. Two duties would then be seen to contradict each other,—the obligation of continual watchfulness, and the duty of understanding the message, that more than twelve centuries would intervene before the Advent. But the contradiction is not real. There could be no obligation to *understand* the times from the first.

"2. Again, it has often been argued that the mystical interpretation would compel us to lengthen the Millennium to 360,000 years. But the principle on which the theory has just now been founded removes this objection also. The Millennium is not included in

that time of waiting, which made it desirable to conceal the times under a symbolic veil.

"3. It has been further made a prominent objection to the year-day, that it was totally unknown for twelve centuries. The fact, however, has been greatly exaggerated beyond its true limits. And besides, the late period at which this interpretation was unfolded was a natural and necessary consequence of the principle on which it depends. Instead therefore of being a *valid objection*, it forms a remarkable *presumption in favour of its truth*. In fact, this exposition appeared first at the very time when it must have appeared, if the principles on which it is founded had a real existence."

As a presumption in favour of the mystical meaning of these times it must be observed that they either occur in the midst of the symbols, or else bear plain marks of a singular phraseology, or are prefaced by words importing concealment.

Another strong presumption in favour of the same view arises from the singular impressiveness and solemnity which accompanies the announcement of these periods; which is hard to explain, if the periods be the brief ones apparently suggested by the expressions used. That there was a mystery in these numbers was recognized in the Church long before its true nature could be guessed.

When we turn from *presumption* to direct *evidence* in favour of the year-day system, the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks occupies the first place, and is indeed by itself an almost conclusive argument in its support. The only way in which its force can be evaded is by saying that the word employed in the original (*shabua*) is ambiguous, meaning a seven, not necessarily of *days*; that the event has shown that in this case it meant

years, and that consequently the passage affords no ground for the year-day view. The answer to this is simple and conclusive. It is perfectly true that the original word does not define the unit, and *might* mean seven of any measure of time; but it is also a fact that in Scripture, where it occurs about ten times, it is invariably *used* to denote seven days; we are therefore bound to suppose it is used in the same sense in Daniel ix., and thus the argument retains all its force. Seventy sevens of *days* was the symbol employed to denote seventy sevens of *years*.

And that this passage affords the true key to the scale on which all these miniature symbols ought to be enlarged appears the more likely, when we consider two other passages in which God Himself declares that He adopts this scale.

The first is the sentence on Israel in the desert: "after the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even *forty days*, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even *forty years*." The twelve men who searched the land were representatives of the twelve tribes of Israel,—a few men representing a great many. So the forty days during which they searched the land are made typical of the forty years during which they should wander in the wilderness. Here, it is not as in Daniel the *fulfilment* which proves the prediction to have been on this scale: but *the scale is fixed by God before the event*.

The second is found in Ezekiel iv. 4, where the prophet is commanded to become himself a living emblem of the house of Israel, by lying first on his left side for 390 days, and then on his right side for 40 days. Ezekiel, like the spies, was a type or representative of the nation: and as he was a *small* emblem of a *large* nation, so the

days were a *brief* emblem of a *long* period. "I have appointed thee a day for a year, a day for a year."

In each of these periods, a day in the enacted prophetic type represented a year in the subsequent history. When therefore, in Daniel and the Apocalypse, we find a variety of enacted prophetic symbols of subsequent history, associated with the announcement of periods in days, why should we doubt that the same scale is to be applied for their enlargement and adaptation to the reality?

In addition to these presumptions in favour of the year-day system, and the scriptural instances of its employment, it must be observed that each of the above-mentioned statements of time affords *internal evidence* that it is not intended to be interpreted literally.

The leading one—the "time, times, and a half"—is a most peculiar form of expression by which to designate a period of three and a half years. It is not the usual or literal expression for that period. Secondly, a *time* implies, rather than excludes, the wider sense. It is of frequent occurrence in the Old Testament, and is employed to denote periods of various lengths, even extending to many years. The idea is one which has no respect to the length or shortness of the period, but simply to its fixed and determinate character. Thirdly, the *different terms used* to denote the same period are a further proof that it cannot mean three and a half natural years. The same interval occurs seven times over. Twice it is mentioned as "time, times, and the dividing of time"; once as "time, times, and a half"; twice as "forty and two months"; and twice as "1260 days." A comparison of the passages will show that they all relate to the same period. Yet the expression is varied in this remarkable manner, and in all these

variations *the natural and literal phrase does not occur*. The Holy Spirit seems to exhaust all the phrases by which the interval could be expressed, excluding always that one form.

An argument in favour of the extended view of these *times* may be drawn from the *seven times* of Nebuchadnezzar's dream and its fulfilment (Dan. iv. 16, 23, 25). Here "seven times" clearly denoted seven literal years. But the Image, the king himself, and the wild beasts, are types of one and the same thing under different aspects; and thus the seven years of the king's insanity become typical of the duration of the Times of the Gentiles. The seven *years of days* prefigure seven *years of years*—2520 years. *The time, times, and a half, the forty-two months, and the 1260 days, all refer to the second half of this period, and must be fulfilled on the same scale, that is, on the scale of a day for a year*. Further, if the whole interval from Nebuchadnezzar's reign be divided into two equal portions, the latter half falls exclusively within the times of the fourth or Roman Empire, and begins soon after the time when its division into separate kingdoms was first completed. This is a pointed coincidence with the broader features of the prophecy, for in the vision also the "time, times, and a half" are all included in the period which follows after the ten horns have arisen.

In the case of the "2300 days" of Daniel viii., there is the same kind of *internal evidence* that it is not intended to be interpreted literally. *Not a passage can be found in the Bible in which a period exceeding a year is stated in days*,—and only two, in which a period exceeding two months is so mentioned,—except those in which these symbolic periods occur. And here, the word *days* is not used: the expression used suggests that no unit of time

is given at all: "*unto evenings and mornings, or unto evening-morning, two thousand three hundred.*" That a long period is intended, appears from the angel's words, "shut up the vision, for it shall be for many days." If we interpret the period on the year-day principle, it reaches from the time of Daniel to the future restoration of Israel, when the sanctuary shall be finally cleansed. The period being so long, and the greater part of it being occupied by this Gospel dispensation, its length is purposely veiled under an enigmatical form of expression, which was evidently not intended to be understood at first. Here is a *reason* for the enigmatical form of the announcement.

In the case of the Locust Woe, Rev. ix. 5, the miniature symbol again demands a miniature period, and the one selected is that of the ordinary ravages of locusts; but it evidently requires the year-day system to make it commensurate with the events predicted.

In the case of the Euphratean horsemen, Rev. ix. 15, the very peculiarity of the phrase used suggests, as before, a mystic meaning. Why, if the period intended were literal, should *an hour* be mentioned at all? and why should the ordinary way of putting the larger period first be completely reversed?

The *forty-two months* of the treading-down of the Holy City, Rev. ix. 2, seems strangely unmeaning if taken literally. Jerusalem has already been trodden down by the Gentiles for 1800 years, and it will, as we know from our Lord's own words, continue to be so till the close of the Times of the Gentiles. And if the period designed were really as brief as that referred to in the passage, in which the heavens were shut up by Elias, why was not the same expression used to designate it,—"*three years and six months?*"

That the "three days *and a half*" during which the witnesses lie unburied (Rev. xi. 9) is symbolic, is proved by the fact that we have about thirty passages in Scripture where three days are mentioned to define an interval, and four where four days occur; but nowhere else is the fraction of a day introduced in such a measurement of time. If the Holy Spirit had intended natural days only, would He have used a preciseness in the statement of time, which is nowhere else employed, —not even in that most important of all facts, the resurrection of our Lord?

Professor Birks thus sums up his masterly argument, of which the foregoing is a mere outline:—"The year-day theory rests on a surprising combination of scriptural arguments, some of which, it is true, are indirect, and some doubtful; but the great majority are full, clear, and unambiguous. First of all, there are four or five distinct presumptions of a general kind, that the dates have some secret meaning. There are, then, three plain and certain, and one more disputable passage, which supply an express *rule of interpretation*, and a key at once simple and comprehensive, the direct appointment of God Himself. When we further proceed to examine the passages in detail, we find that every one, without exception, yields some peculiar argument in support of this same view; and several of them furnish us with two or three distinct proofs. And besides all these internal evidences for the system, it is found to have a basis in the heavenly revolutions themselves, and to be confirmed by its manifest harmony with the most exact elements of natural science."¹

The meaning of this allusion will be explained in later chapters.

¹ *First Elements of Sacred Prophecy*, p. 391.

CHAPTER III

THE THREE GREAT DISPENSATIONS

THE great end of all human history, like that of the existence of every human being, is *a moral one*. Existence, to the entire race, like life to each individual, is a state of probation and education. Ignore this moral purpose of God, and human history becomes inexplicable, its chronology reducible to no system, and its study comparatively profitless. Recognize it, and the whole outline and movement of the great drama are at once intelligible, the plan underlying its periods is clear, and its study becomes fraught with lessons of the deepest importance.

The true plan of history can therefore be found only in the Bible. In vain do those who neglect the Scriptures seek to understand aright either man's past or his future.

The main divisions of history which we shall now proceed to present will be found therefore to have a character more moral and dispensational than political. The central line will be seen to be *the history of the Jewish nation and of the Christian Church*. Bible history and prophecy range themselves around these, just as Bible geography ranges itself around Jerusalem and the Holy Land: and the reason is obvious.

A comprehension of the Biblical system of times and seasons is calculated to fill the mind with awe and

admiration, and to draw forth fresh worship of the omniscient God, who orders all things after the counsel of His own will, and knows the end from the beginning. Our times are in His hands, and the times of all earthly empires, and kingdoms, and dynasties; and in due time His own kingdom shall overthrow all other dominion, and stand for ever. "The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it, for it shall surely come, it shall not tarry" (Hab. ii. 3).

The grand primary division of all human history is into dispensations: three main dispensations:—the Patriarchal Age, the Jewish Dispensation, and the Times of the Gentiles:—and into these only, prior to the "Times of the Restitution of all things," that is, the Millennial Age.

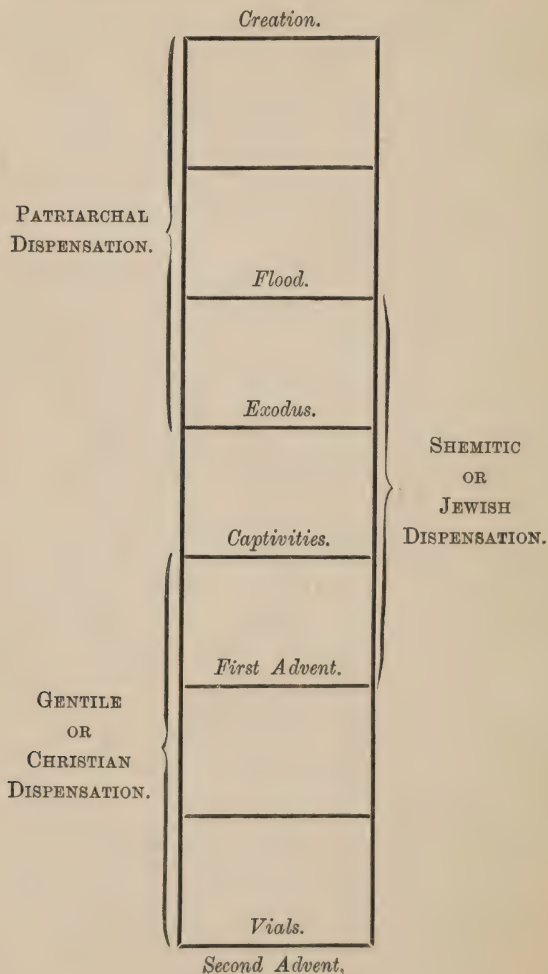
The limits of the first, or Patriarchal Age, are defined by the Apostle Paul in Romans v.; "death reigned from Adam to Moses."

The second, or Jewish Dispensation, dating from the Divine act of dividing the nations of the earth, included the entire history of the Jewish people and their fathers, and extended from the re-peopling of the earth after the Flood to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in A.D. 70.

The third is distinguished by our Lord Himself as a separate period, under the title of the "Times of the Gentiles" (Luke xxi. 24). It is the period of the duration of the empires prefigured by the great Image of Nebuchadnezzar,—the earliest, the simplest, and the most comprehensive of all the symbolic prophecies. It is the great Gentile dispensation, during which dominion in the earth, and *over Israel*, is by God committed to Gentile powers. Speaking generally, it dates from the

THE THREE DISPENSATIONS

PATRIARCHAL—JEWISH—CHRISTIAN



rise of the four great monarchies, and extends to the second Advent of Christ to establish "the kingdom of the God of heaven, which shall never be destroyed."

The statements of time connected with this third period give the clue to the duration of all three. As distinctly intimated in Daniel, it is *a great week*,—"seven times." Its latter half is the oft-recurring "time, times, and a half," or 1260 years. Its whole duration is *seven years of years*; that is, it is a week, each of whose *days* is a year of 360 years: in other words, it is a period of 2520 natural years.

Each of the two previous dispensations has, as we shall presently show, a similar duration. If therefore the three had followed each other in chronological sequence, their united period would be between seven and eight thousand years.

But this is not the case. The second takes its rise two-thirds down the course of the first; and the third takes its rise two-thirds down the course of the second; so that the whole period comprised in the three dispensations is nearly 6000 years, as will be seen by an examination of the accompanying diagram.

The dispensations are represented, not as *joined on to*, but as *growing out of*, each other: for there exists between them not a mere lifeless sequence, but an intimate living connection, which makes this theoretically proper, as well as chronologically true.

Each of the three dispensations has its distinctive and peculiar character, though the three resemble each other in this, that each ends in apostasy on the part of man, and in judgment, and the introduction of a higher economy, on the part of God.

The Patriarchal Age is broadly distinguished by the fact of its having "no law," from the Jewish; and this

again by its limitation of nationality, from the Times of the Gentiles: but the Flood, and the Exodus, and the Captivities, and the fall of Jerusalem, and the yet future destruction of the Beast, and the False Prophet, and Babylon the Great, at the Epiphany of Christ,—mark out so many distinct closes and recommencements.

THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES

We proceed now to trace the chronological measures of these three dispensations, and their respective positions in the great stream of time. We will take the Times of the Gentiles first, as it is the most important, the most closely connected with the prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse, and the one whose duration is most distinctly defined in Scripture.

When the Egyptian captivity of his seed was announced to Abraham, chronological limits were assigned to it; and when the Babylonish captivity was foretold by Isaiah, seventy years was fixed as its duration. It might therefore be expected that the length of the period of Jewish affliction and degradation, which is termed by our Lord “the Times of the Gentiles,” would also be more or less distinctly foretold: yet as it includes the times of the Christian Church—those ages of waiting for Christ, over which in tender mercy God saw fit to throw a veil of mystery,—it is improbable that its duration will anywhere be revealed in plain terms.

We have already shown that this period or dispensation is that during which the Jews are either wholly cast out of their land, or allowed to occupy it as mere tributaries,—and during which also the throne is taken from the seed of David and given by God to

Gentile monarchs. It is the period during which the *land of Canaan*, promised to the seed of Abraham, and the *throne of Israel*, secured by covenant to the seed of David, are both alienated, and occupied by Gentiles instead of Jews. During by far the greater part of this period, Israel has been scattered among the nations, Jerusalem "trodden down of the Gentiles," and the land laid desolate.

The whole period is occupied by the duration of the four great monarchies, and it is to be closed by a fifth great monarchy; "the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed . . . it shall stand for ever"—a kingdom symbolized by the stone cut out without hands, which smites and destroys the Image, becomes a great mountain, and fills the whole earth (Dan. ii. 44).

This kingdom, as we learn from other Scriptures, is the kingdom of Christ Himself, and *His accession to the throne of the earth marks the termination of the Times of the Gentiles*. "The Lord God shall give unto *Him* the throne of His father David." David foresaw that of the fruit of his loins God would raise up Christ to sit upon His throne. God will overturn one monarchy after another, "until *He* come, whose right it is,"—and will give the throne to Him.

And prior to this restoration of the throne to the house of Judah, in the person of Christ, will be the restoration of the land of Canaan to the seed of Abraham.

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set His hand again *the second time* to recover the remnant of His people which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. He shall assemble the

outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah, from the four corners of the earth" (Isa. xi. 12). God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew, they are still beloved for the fathers' sakes, and in due time, when the fullness of the Gentiles has been brought in, "all Israel shall be saved." The gifts and calling of God are without repentance; the land must revert to its rightful owners, the seed of Abraham, and the throne must be filled by its predicted occupant, the Son of David, the Prince of Peace, of the increase of whose government there shall be no end, who shall "order and establish the kingdom with judgment and with justice for ever."

However improbable it may appear that Palestine should ever again be the home of a mighty Jewish nation, Scripture leaves no room to doubt that such will be the case,—that the same Almighty arm, which, to place Israel there of old, plagued Egypt, destroyed the host of Pharaoh, and extirpated almost entirely the seven nations of Canaan; which subsequently overthrew the mighty Babylonian monarchy, in order to restore Israel to it for a comparatively brief period by means of Cyrus and Artaxerxes;—will in due time overthrow the Turkish power which has so long trodden down Jerusalem, defiled the sanctuary, and desolated the land of Israel, and will, *the second time*, restore His ancient people to their inalienable inheritance. Every barrier must fall, every obstacle be overthrown, that the purpose of God may be accomplished, and the promises to Abraham and to his seed be fulfilled.

God has clearly revealed that all this shall be; has He also revealed *when* it shall be? He has revealed the *character* of the Times of the Gentiles; has He also revealed their *duration*? We believe He has, very

distinctly, though not in plain statements. He has given many a clue and many a mystic intimation, which when combined by those who compare *prophecy* with *history*, afford no indistinct reply to this inquiry. It is of course needful to take profane history into account in considering this question, as many of the events predicted extend beyond the point at which inspired records cease. Nor should we have the slightest hesitation in doing this, for we are evidently intended to make use of uninspired historical evidence. Scripture history *ceases* just at the point where by common consent profane history becomes reliable, and passes from the dim regions of fable into the broad daylight of well-ascertained facts. God graciously presents us with inspired records of that far distant past of which no uninspired records exist; but where authentic histories *are* in existence, He leaves us to learn from them what the course of mundane events has been. He makes provision for our unavoidable ignorance, but none for our indolence. He puts into our hands the telescope of Scripture history, to enable us to see farther into the distant past than would with the naked human eye be possible; but He does not embody in the sacred writings matters, such as the fall of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jewish people in the days of Titus, which are sufficiently well attested by Josephus and other careful historians.

Looking then at ancient prophecy and at sacred and profane history, what do we learn as to the duration of these "Times of the Gentiles"?

That they are appointed to extend over a great week, over "seven times," seven years whose days are years, 2520 natural years.

This is *inferred* from Scripture rather than distinctly

stated in it; but the inference is so well grounded as to be of almost equal weight with a distinct declaration.

When this long period of Jewish desolation and chastisement was first threatened (Lev. xxvi.), the expression "seven times" was emphatically used in connection with it. That this had any chronological force, was not of course understood by those who received the warning, but it is almost impossible in the light of subsequent predictions, and in the light of history, to doubt that the Omniscient God used an expression in harmony with *His* foreknowledge of Israel's future, and expressive of His Divine purpose—a purpose which *we* have seen wrought out in history.¹

Old Testament history shows that Israel's inveterate idolatry brought upon them judgment after judgment; that again and again God "being full of compassion forgave their iniquity and destroyed them not; yea, many a time turned He His anger away, and did not stir up all His wrath; for He remembered that they were but flesh, a wind that passeth away and cometh not again"; but that at last the measure of their iniquity being filled up, He sent upon them a chastisement, the *perfect* character of which is marked out by the *perfection of its period*, "seven times."

¹ In Leviticus xxvi. the expression *seven times* occurs in four verses. In three of these (verses 18, 24, 28) it represents a *numeral* only in the Hebrew, and is suggestive of a *sevenfold punishment*. In the fourth (verse 21) this suggestion is put into words: *seven times more plagues*. The idea of *time* is absent: but it may well be, as the author here suggests, that a hint is intended, to be understood only in the light of subsequent history and of prophecy, of the *seven times* which measure the Gentile period. Such a hint is to be found in the words of St. Peter, *one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day*: for it was only revealed to St. John, many years afterwards, that a *thousand years* would actually be the length of *the day of the Lord*.—ED.

Seventy years,—the first portion of this long season of rejection, dispersion, and affliction, were spent in absolute captivity in Babylon and Assyria. The second stage was longer—it was the “seventy weeks,” or 490 years of the restoration of Judah, and was passed by the restored remnant of the two tribes in a subject, tributary, and troubled state, in their own land, while the ten tribes remained captives in Assyria. This extended to the coming of Messiah the Prince, and the destruction of Jerusalem consequent on His rejection; and then commenced the *third* and longest portion of the 2520 years, which the Jews have passed in miserable exile, scattered over all the countries of the earth.

Already their chastisement has extended over “seven times,” dating from the *earliest* stage in their captivities: *it will soon have done so, dating from the latest*. The wrath has come upon Israel to the uttermost; the fountain for sin and for uncleanness shall ere long be opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

And secondly, though the fourfold image which symbolized to Nebuchadnezzar the succession of Gentile empires, which were to fill up this long interval of Jewish rejection, had no chronology attached to it, yet we know that those empires, the Assyrian, the Persian, the Grecian, and the Pagan and Papal Roman powers, have as a matter of history lasted for about 2520 years. Now history is the evolution of the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, which must therefore have before assigned to “the Times of the Gentiles” *at least* this duration.

The symbol of the fourfold image declared that these Gentile empires were to be succeeded by the kingdom

of the God of heaven, but it did not reveal or even intimate after what lapse of time this should be. A subsequent vision granted to Nebuchadnezzar did. He saw a tree, which he was told symbolized himself, cut down, and its stump left to be wet with the dew of heaven, and its portion with the beasts in the grass of the earth, its heart changed from a man's heart, and a beast's heart given it, until "seven times" should pass over it.

This vision was, as Daniel told the monarch, a prophecy of *the seven years' insanity*, which, as a chastening for his pride, was to overtake *him*, and which was to teach him to know God, and to own that "the heavens do rule." "All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar," and at the end of the days, that is, of the seven years of his insanity, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, his understanding returned to him, and he blessed and praised and honoured the Eternal God, whose dominion is everlasting, whose will is sovereign, whose power is infinite, and who is able to abase those who walk in pride. The *seven years' bestial degradation of the monarch during his insanity* answer to the *period of Gentile rule* represented by the *four wild beasts* of a subsequent vision. "The king himself *represents* the succession of imperial sovereignty, till the kingdom of Christ shall come; the 'seven times' that passed over him must therefore *represent* the whole period of debasement in the Gentile kingdoms, from the times of Nebuchadnezzar till their full redemption."¹

A further argument in support of the same view may be derived from the "time, times, and a half" of the "Little Horn." We have seen that prophecy assigns to the Apostasy of the latter days a duration of 1260

¹ Birks, *Elements of Prophecy*, p. 353.

years, and that this period is repeatedly spoken of as *half a week*. Where are we to find the other half of this great week? As the Apostasy is to be overthrown finally by the Advent of Christ, it is clear the other half cannot *follow* but must *precede* the half which measures the existence of the Apostasy; it must date back, that is, from its *rise*. Calculating backwards then from the rise of the Papal and Mohammedân powers in the beginning of the seventh century, 1260 years lead up to the days of Nebuchadnezzar, to the commencement of the Babylonish Captivity, the point at which we know the times of the Gentiles began. Thus we see that the entire period occupied by the four great empires, represented by the image, and by the four beasts, is the *whole* week, whose *latter half* is the time of the dominion of the "Little Horn." During the whole of this period Israel has ceased to be an independent kingdom, and during two-thirds of it, Jerusalem has been trodden down by the Gentiles. Each of the four great monarchies in turn ruled over the seed of Abraham, until at length, the cup of Jewish iniquity being full, the Romans came, took away their place and nation, and almost destroyed them as a people. Seventy years before this final judgment, Messiah came and was cut off, and His rejection and crucifixion by the Jews, which sealed and brought on their doom, inaugurated the Gospel dispensation, and the ingathering of the Gentiles to the Kingdom of God. Thus the Christian dispensation, so thoroughly *Gentile* in its aspect, fills two-thirds of the Times of the Gentiles, the first third having been occupied with the growth of Gentile dominion to the extraordinary development it had attained in the days of Augustus Cæsar. We conclude therefore that the dispensation in whose closing days

we live was foreordained by God to run a course of 2520 years, or, in symbolic language, of "seven times"; and that our Lord Jesus Christ had this great week in his mind when He said, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the Times of the Gentiles be fulfilled," an expression which seems to imply that the period so designated had definite chronological limits. We proceed to inquire when it took its rise. From what great event are we to date the commencement of these "Times of the Gentiles"?

Happily the answer is not far to seek. We are not left to select among the complex changes of history one which seems to us of paramount importance. Inspiration itself settles the question. The entire course of Gentile supremacy is symbolized by *an image* whose *head* was its beginning, and whose *ten toes* are chronologically its end.

Interpreting his dream by Divine revelation to the proud monarch of Babylon, the prophet says to him "*thou art this head of gold.*" If by this be meant "*thou*" *personally*, then the "*terminus a quo*" or starting point of the "Times of the Gentiles" must be sought, as has generally been done, somewhere in the lifetime of Nebuchadnezzar.

But it seems clear that this was not the case, and that Daniel addressed the Babylonian king, not as an individual, but as the representative of the empire, for immediately after saying "*thou art this head of gold,*" he adds, "*and after thee shall arise another kingdom, inferior to thee,*" alluding to the Medo-Persian Empire which succeeded the Babylonian.

Now this empire did not rise after Nebuchadnezzar *himself*, but after *his kingdom*. It rose on the fall of the Babylonian Empire, but not till four successors of

Nebuchadnezzar had occupied the throne, of whom Belshazzar was the last.

Though undoubtedly its most illustrious ruler, Nebuchadnezzar was neither the first nor the last head of the Babylonian Empire, which lasted 210 years. The "head of gold" evidently represents the *whole* Babylonian power, just as the "breast of silver" represents the whole Medo-Persian; and it seems natural therefore to suppose that one main starting-point of those Times of the Gentiles, which include the four great empires, will be found at the era of *the rise* of the first of the four, *i.e., of the Babylonian power.*

CHAPTER IV

THE COMMENCING ERA OF THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES

THE commencing era of the "Times of the Gentiles" must be an era of *decay and fall of Jewish independence, coincident with a rise of Babylonian power.*

Now the seventy years' captivity of Judah in Babylon was not the beginning of the decay and fall of Jewish independence, nor was it the beginning of the rise of the Babylonian power.

The year of the accession of Nabonassar, the first king of Babylon, is an era of great historic importance. It ranks with the greatest eras of history: the Greek era of the Olympiads; the Roman A.U.C. or era of the foundation of the city of Rome; the Syrian era of the Seleucidæ; the Christian era of the Nativity; the Papal era of indictions (dating from the conversion of Constantine, the fall of Paganism, and the beginning of the Imperial Church); and the Mohammedan era of the Hegira.

Moreover, the exact chronological point of this "*era of Nabonassar*" (N.E.) is more certain than any other date of remote antiquity, because with it are connected a series of ancient astronomic observations, which have been *verified* by the labours of astronomers during the last three centuries. It is certain not only to a year, but to a day and hour. It is noon of the 26th of February 747 B.C.

That this important era, marking the commencement of the Babylonian power, should be one starting point of the 2520 years of the "Times of the Gentiles," seems as natural and suitable as that the capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar should be another.

The subjugation of the twelve tribes of Israel to the Assyrian and Babylonian powers, was only *gradually* accomplished. Monarch after monarch came up against the land; and one deportation of captives succeeded another. Ephraim first fell, then Judah: and Judah fell first, partially, into the rank of a tributary kingdom, then completely, into the bitterest bondage, captivity, and degradation. Pul and Tiglath-pileser, Shalmanezar and Sennacherib, Esarhaddon and Nebuchadnezzar, all played their parts in the great and mournful tragedy. The following brief summary of the facts may be verified by reference to Scripture.

The earliest invasion of the land which resulted in a carrying captive of Israelites, was that recorded in 2 Kings xv. 19, in the reign of Menahem, king of Israel. "*Pul*, the king of Assyria, came against the land, and Menahem gave him a thousand talents of silver." And in 1 Chronicles v. 26 we read that this Pul, and also Tiglath-pileser, carried away the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half tribe of Manasseh, and brought them "unto Halah and Habor, and to the river Gozan," *i.e.*, into Assyria.

Subsequently Ahaz king of Judah, when alarmed by the combined attack of Pekah king of Israel and Resin king of Syria, sent to Tiglath-pileser to come to his aid, instead of trusting in God, as Isaiah counselled him, and being quiet. It was like the sheep calling the wolf to his aid! He invited an enemy who soon overran the land. After taking Damascus from the king of Syria, Tiglath-pileser took a number of places in the land of

Naphtali, and "*carried their inhabitants captive to Assyria*" (2 Kings xv. 29).

His successor, Shalmanezer, invaded in force the kingdom of the ten tribes, and after a three years' siege took Samaria, the capital, and *carried all Israel away into Assyria* (2 Kings xvii. 3-6).

Sennacherib afterwards invaded Judah, and ravaged the country for four or five years, taking every place of any strength, and at last besieging Jerusalem. Brought to the very verge of ruin, the city was at that time saved by a miracle, in answer to the prayer of the good king Hezekiah, himself similarly saved from the jaws of death not long after. The day of *Jerusalem's* fall had not yet fully come (2 Kings xviii., xix.).

The impious and profane Sennacherib was murdered by his sons as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, and Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead. This king carried captive another detachment of Israelites, thus finally destroying the national existence of the ten tribes, just sixty-five years after Isaiah's prediction to Ahaz, that before that interval had elapsed "Ephraim should be broken and be no more a people." He also carried captive Manasseh king of Judah, who was, however, subsequently restored.

And then lastly, in the days of Jehoiakim, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against Judah, and made that king his tributary vassal, while his son afterwards became his captive. The story is given in full in 2 Kings xxiv. "Jehoiachin went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers: and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign. And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, even ten thousand captives, and

all the craftsmen and smiths: those carried he into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon; none remained save the poorest sort of the people of the land."

Nebuchadnezzar left the uncle of Jehoiachin—Zedekiah—behind, as his viceroy in Jerusalem; but this deputy proving faithless and rebelling, he returned, besieged and took the city, and carried Zedekiah, with his eyes put out, captive to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar's captain, Nebuzaradan, finished the work of destruction, burned the Temple, and broke down the walls of Jerusalem, carrying captive the rest of the people. This was the final act in the long drama, and it is said of it, "so Judah was carried away out of their land" (2 Kings xxv. 21).

Now, as given in Scripture and verified by the most careful chronological investigations, the leading stages of this decline and fall of the Jewish monarchy were as follows:—

	B.C.
1. The invasion of Pul, following Menahem's accession in . . .	770
2. The siege and fall of Samaria . . .	723
3. The captivity of Manasseh and de- portation by Esarhaddon . . .	676
4. The final fall of the throne of Judah . . .	602-598

The invasion of Pul is probably to be assigned to the first half of Menahem's reign, the duration of which was ten years.

We have therefore first, in general, *the era* from B.C. 770 to B.C. 598, a period of one hundred and seventy-two years, as a "time of the end," a period conspicuously including all the main stages of the decline and fall of the Jewish monarchy, as well as those of the rise of Babylonian power. Wars and reverses had before been experienced by the Jewish nation; but it had never

previously been subdued and carried captive as it was during this period. The fall was final. A restoration was indeed enjoyed by two of the twelve tribes, but it was only partial and temporary; the Temple was rebuilt, but not in its former glory; the city was restored, but never to *independent* sovereignty; and after "seventy weeks" of such restoration, a worse flood of desolation than ever overtook the city, temple, and people, from which they have never yet rallied. The 168-172 years ending with Nebuchadnezzar's capture of Jerusalem was emphatically the era of departing glory, the time when *Lo Ammi* was inscribed on the brow of the daughter of Zion. And *in this critical era* four epochs of *special crisis* stand prominently out, as we have seen, connected with the four conquerors, Pul, Shalmanezzer, Esarhaddon, and Nebuchadnezzar, the years B.C. 770-766, B.C. 723, B.C. 676, and B.C. 602-598. The first three have relation mainly to the kingdom of Ephraim or the ten tribes, the last to the kingdom of Judah or the two tribes.

THE CLOSING ERA

Now, if "seven times" be the appointed duration of the "Times of the Gentiles," we may expect to find, after an interval of 2520 years from this *Jewish captivity era*, a corresponding "time of the end," a period of similar decline and fall, overthrow and decadence, of the last form or forms of *Gentile ruling power*, ushering in the close of the dispensation, the restoration of Israel, and the kingdom of Messiah the Son of David.

And this latter decline and fall, like the former, will take place, in all probability, *under judgment from God*, on account of long-continued and terrible sin. Just as the patriarchal "seven times" died out amid the plagues

of Egypt, and the overthrow of the Red Sea; and as the Jewish "seven times" expired amid the blood and the flames of Titus' siege and sack of Jerusalem; so the Gentile "seven times" is destined, as the Apocalypse reveals, to come to an end under the outpouring of the "seven golden vials full of the wrath of God," against the sins of apostate Christendom.

A very simple arithmetical calculation shows that 2520 years from this Captivity era brings us to the epoch A.D. 1751-5—A.D. 1919-1923,¹ and we inquire, Has this period of 168-172 years, as far as it has elapsed, had any such character? And further, Have there occurred in its course any years marked by such events as to be unmistakable *crises* in the process of decay and destruction? And if so, do such years correspond as closing termini with the critical years of the Captivity period, at an interval of 2520 years or "seven times"?

The answer to these questions is full of solemn interest. In seeking it we have *not* to take into account all the empires and kingdoms of the world. The range is limited by the prophecy itself.

Gentile supremacy over Israel has been confined to one line. The Chinese and the Americans never conquered Judea, nor held Jerusalem. They never defiled the sanctuary and persecuted the Israel of God, either literal or spiritual. The line of Gentile powers who *have* done both, is distinctly defined in the two fourfold visions in Daniel,—the Image, and the Four Beasts,—in which were symbolized the succession of the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman Empires. The three former having passed entirely away, *our search is confined to the limits of the fourth of these.*

That fourth, or Roman, monarchy was foretold as

¹ One year has to be subtracted in adding A.D. to B.C. periods.

existing in two states—an earlier undivided, and a later divided one. The former of these has passed away, equally with the Babylonian, Persian, and Grecian empires. *Our search is therefore confined to the time and sphere occupied by the kingdoms which rose out of the ruins of the old Pagan Roman Empire.* Two politico-religious powers or dynasties, symbolized as “little horns,” are represented as rising up and wielding supremacy among these kingdoms; these little horns,—the Papal and Mohammedan powers,—constitute therefore the last leading phase of Gentile power contemplated in the prophecy; both oppose God and His saints, defile His sanctuary, and tread down the holy city, spiritual or literal.

The question before us is therefore reduced to narrow limits. *Only in the history of these two powers need we look for the answer;* and in judging of the character and relative importance of events in their history, we must compare them, not with events in the history of other powers, or other parts of the world, but only with *other events in the history of these powers.*

Unless this is borne in mind, it is impossible rightly to estimate the historical incidents, which must pass under review in connection with this question. Again we ask then, Have the 168 years between A.D. 1755 and A.D. 1923, or rather that portion of them which has elapsed, been *a period of decadence and overthrow to the once mighty Papal and Mohammedan powers?*

Historians would with one voice reply, Beyond all question, they have! But as all are not familiar with the facts of modern history, and as many who are have never considered them in this connection, it is needful to recall some leading events in the recent history of Popery and Mohammedanism.

THE DECLINE OF PAPAL POWER

France had taken rank as *the first of Papal nations*, ever since the conversion of Clovis, and the donations of Pepin and Charlemagne. France had taken a leading place in opposition to the glorious Reformation; by the iron heel of power, she had crushed down the new life and had extinguished the rekindled Gospel light of that glad era. In the massacre of St. Bartholomew she had all but extirpated Protestantism; and by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, she had banished from her shores her surviving Huguenot subjects. France was for more than a thousand years, *a main pillar of the Popedom in Europe*.

The middle of the eighteenth century saw the beginning of a marvellous change in France. It is regarded by historians as the era of the rise of the French Revolution. In less than half a century from 1750, this first of Papal nations had become madly and violently *anti-papal*; and this most servilely superstitious people had become openly and even fiercely infidel.

The great apostle and arch-priest of French infidelity, *Voltaire*, was in the height of his influence at this period. With the aid of his associate Deistic and Atheistic philosophers, he was deluging France with clever, anti-monarchical, anti-ecclesiastical writings of the most audacious and blasphemous character. These men enlisted talent and science for the attack, employed the keen shafts of ridicule, and appealed to all the evil passions. They held up to hatred and contempt the apostate and corrupt form of religion with which alone the French were familiar, and with fanatical zeal sought to overthrow all its power over the popular mind. Unjustly, but naturally, they visited on Christianity all the falsehoods, absurdities, hypocrisies, immoralities, cruelties,

and manifold wickednesses of Popery. "Ecrasez l'infame!" (crush the wretch!) was their modern version of "Crucify Him!" and their avowed object was to bring about the utter rejection of revealed religion.

They succeeded only too well! France ceased to be Catholic, and became—*infidel*; and infidel France, having thrown off all restraints of law and order, natural and Divine, plunged, before the end of the century, into the maddest excesses of revolution and crime.

In 1793 came to its crisis that tremendous, unparalleled, irresistible movement, which put an end at once to absolute monarchy, aristocracy, and ecclesiastical power in France, and which communicated to the neighbouring nations of Europe the shocks of revolution, and the fierce fires of democracy, together with an anti-ecclesiastical mania that has never since been allayed.

The French Revolution is by common consent regarded as the commencement of a new era for the nations of Europe; but it is not always remembered that the proximate cause of the French Revolution, *the infidelity of the nation*, dates from a generation earlier. That Revolution could never have assumed the character it did, had not the French people previously lost all fear of God, and all respect for man; had not the national mind been blinded, and the national heart hardened, against all claims human and Divine, by the pernicious teachings of the infidel philosophers.

It is needless to give details of that Revolution here; our readers will mostly be familiar with the tragic facts. How the infidel democracy suddenly uprose in its might, destroyed the Bastille, issued its declaration of the rights of man; assaulted the king and queen by night, at Versailles, and murdering some of their body guard, forced them to proceed as prisoners to Paris, the bloody

heads carried on pikes before the royal carriage. How the people confiscated all the vast revenues of the Church, all the domains of the Crown, and all the estates of refugee nobles, for the use of the State; subjected to themselves all ecclesiastical, civil, and judicial power throughout the country; murdered the royal guard, and some five thousand leading Royalists; dethroned, imprisoned, tried, condemned, and murdered the king, and then the queen; declared war against all kings, and sympathy with all revolutionists everywhere; how the "reign of terror" witnessed the slaughter of one million and twenty-two thousand persons, of all ranks and ages, and of both sexes, till the streets of Paris ran with blood, and the guillotines could not overtake their work. How thousands were mowed down by grape-shot fusilades; drowned in "noyades," where, in loaded vessels, hundreds of victims were purposely sunk in the rivers; roasted alive in heated ovens; or tortured to death by other infernal cruelties. How Christianity was publicly renounced, and a prostitute enthroned as "goddess of reason" at Notre Dame, and worshipped by the National Convention and by the mob of Paris, with the wildest orgies of licentiousness (morality as well as mercy having perished with religion); how the most horrid mockery of the solemn rites of Christianity was publicly enacted, an ass being made to drink the sacramental wine; how the Sabbath itself was abolished, and the decade substituted for the week; and how hundreds and thousands of priests were massacred or driven into exile, and the churches and cathedrals turned into stables and barracks. Taken as a whole, the French Revolution was a convulsion in which the angry passions of men, set free from all restraint, manifested themselves with a force and fury unprecedented in the history of the world, against

monarchical, aristocratic, ecclesiastical, and religious institutions.

Let these things be considered in the light of a mighty and successful revolt against absolute monarchical power, and Papal tyranny and usurpation, and it will at once be granted that *nothing similar had ever occurred previously*, in the history of the fourth great Empire.

Terribly iniquitous had been the career of the monarchical power thus rudely overthrown; and fearfully corrupt the priesthood and religion thus utterly and with abhorrence rejected. A solemn character of *retribution* attaches to even the worst excesses of the French Revolution. The Papacy, in the hour of its agony, was exultingly reminded of its own similar cruelties against Protestants; Papists were treated according to the example set by Papists of other days, and the worst barbarities of Revolutionary France could not out-Herod the previous barbarities of Papal France.

The career of Napoleon,—the second phase of the French Revolution,—was a further and even more notable stage in the fall of the Papacy. He made open war against Pius VI., and compelled him to sign that most humiliating treaty of Tolentino, by which Ferrara, Bologna, and Romagna ("Peter's patrimony") were ceded to France, with an indemnity of a million and a half pounds, and a hundred of the finest pictures and statues in the Vatican. Berthier, a general of the French Republic, soon after took Pius VI. prisoner; the tricolor flag was displayed from the Capitol, and the Pope's temporal power declared to be at an end. He was carried captive to France, where, in 1799, he died in exile.

When Napoleon, for political reasons, restored the Roman Catholic religion in France, it was only to inflict on it what its own dignitaries deem additional insult

and injury. It was put on a level with all other sects of religion, and merely tolerated.

No trace of an admission of Papal supremacy, or even of Papal influence, is to be found in the concordat between Napoleon and the Pope for France in 1801, or in that for Italy in 1803. At his coronation in 1804, Napoleon required the Pope's attendance, and made Pius VII. cross the Alps in mid-winter, not to confer a crown, but merely to adorn a ceremony. Napoleon placed the crown on his own head himself; and the Pope stood by, "an important and imposing, but purposely slighted witness of the coronation." Napoleon did not at that time wish to annihilate the Popedom, as the revolutionary Directory had done, but to retain the Sovereign Pontiff as his vassal. But when, a few years later, the Pope resisted his will, he soon showed him who was master. In 1809, when he was supreme in Europe, he issued from the palace of the Schönbrunn in Vienna a decree dividing and distributing the dominions yet remaining to the Pope in Italy, and constituting Rome itself the second city in the French Empire. At the same time he reduced the "Holy Father" to the rank of a French subject, and even in his sacerdotal character, to that of a salaried official of the French Court, his income being fixed at £80,000 a year.

The Bull of excommunication, which the Pope fulminated against Napoleon in return, only made him ridiculous in the eyes of Europe; like his predecessor, he was carried captive by the French army, first to Savona, then to Fontainebleau, where he was forced to sign another concordat, renouncing all claim to Rome for ever.

On the overthrow of Napoleon, the Pope was restored to Rome; "but he sat not on his throne as once before; his power was crippled, his seat unstable, the riches of

his Church were rifled, and a mighty precedent and principle of action had been established against him, which could scarcely fail of bearing similarly bitter fruit afterwards.”¹

The restoration of Papal supremacy in France did not last long. The year 1830 brought about another thoroughly antisacerdotal revolution. Charles X., who had acceded to the throne in 1824, had to abdicate, and his ministers had to flee for their lives; while the Duke of Orleans was proclaimed king under the title of Louis Philippe.

In 1848 another revolution again constituted France a Republic; tumults broke out in Paris in February, the Tuileries were ransacked, and frightful disorders committed. Louis Philippe was obliged to abdicate and take refuge in England; and “the Second Republic” was proclaimed. A fortnight after the fall of Louis Philippe, the constitution was proclaimed in Rome, and the city and country were thrown into a state of revolution.

Before the end of the year Count Rossi, the Pope’s prime minister, was killed, and the Pope had to flee from Rome. He was deposed from his temporal authority, and an Italian Republic was proclaimed. It was only by the power of the French that the Pope was afterwards for a time restored, when Louis Napoleon had become President of the French Republic. With occasional pauses, and with gleams of passing prosperity now and then, the course of the Papacy has ever since been one of downfall and decay.

In 1866 the Romish Empire of Austria was worsted by Protestant Prussia at the memorable battle of Sadowa, a battle the results of which were as decisive as those of Waterloo. Austria received a shock from

¹ Elliott, *Horæ Apocalypticæ*.

which it has never recovered, and was obliged to cede Venetia, which was annexed to the kingdom of Italy, while Prussia was raised to the rank of one of the great powers of Europe. In 1868, the Spanish Revolution took place, Queen Isabella fled, and Spain was plunged into years of cruel strife, in the course of which the Jesuits were banished, their monasteries and churches confiscated and sold or pulled down, and the bones of the martyrs brought to light at the Quemadero.

The same year Pius IX. sent out his famous encyclical letter *summoning* the Œcumenical Council for 1870. Six archbishop princes, 49 cardinals, 11 patriarchs, 680 archbishops and bishops, 28 abbots, 29 generals of orders, 803 spiritual rulers, representing the Church of Rome throughout the world, solemnly decreed the dogma that the occupant of the Papal Chair is, in all his decisions regarding faith and morals, infallible! It is said that arrangements had been made to reflect a glory around the person of the Pope by means of mirrors at noon, when the decree was made (18th July 1870). But the sun shone not that day. A violent storm broke over Rome, the sky was darkened by tempest, and the voices of the Council were lost in the rolling of thunder.

On the very day following this culmination of Papal arrogance and self-exaltation was declared that terrible Franco-German war, in which the French Empire of Louis Napoleon,—by the soldiers of which the Pope was maintained on his tottering throne,—fell. *The temporal sovereignty of the Papacy fell with it.* No sooner had the French troops been withdrawn from Rome, and the French Empire collapsed, than the Italian Government announced its intention of entering the Roman States, and did so. On the 20th of September 1870, Rome was declared the capital of the kingdom of Italy, and

became the residence and the seat of the Government of Victor Emmanuel. The *Times*' summary for that year says: "The most remarkable circumstance in the annexation of Rome and its territory to the kingdom of Italy, is the languid indifference with which the transfer has been regarded by Catholic Christendom. A change which would once have *convulsed the world* has failed to distract attention from the more absorbing spectacle of the Franco-German war. *Within the same year, the Papacy has assumed the highest spiritual exaltation to which it could aspire, and lost the temporal sovereignty which it had held for a thousand years.*"

Taking these and similar facts into consideration, there can be no question that the years which have elapsed since 1755, have been years of conspicuous, unprecedented, fatal calamity to the Papal Power.¹

It has been the period of the outpouring of the Vials of the wrath of God, to use the striking symbol of the Apocalypse for the closing judgments of the dispensation. Those *Vial-plagues* (Rev. xvi.) cannot fail to recall the similar plagues sent upon Egypt prior to the

¹ The years that have elapsed since these words were written have seen the Papal Church steadily losing power, and adherents, in all Roman Catholic countries,—even in Austria, the only Power left which is still openly controlled by the Papacy. The author's conclusions, with regard to Rome, have so far been justified. But the world has not yet done with the Papal Power, which is now engaged in a desperate venture for the recovery of its lost authority. Methods of "frightfulness," introduced by the Jesuits, saved the Papacy from destruction in the days of the Reformation. It is to methods of "frightfulness" that it is turning to-day, in its whole-hearted support of German militarism, for a generation, while controlling German policy through the Centre Party,—and in the evident alliance between Germany and the Vatican during the present war. A victorious Germany, while caring nothing for the Christian faith, would be quite prepared to restore the Pope to Temporal Power.—ED.

Exodus. Then they were literal, in harmony with a typical dispensation; now they are the antitypical realities, of which boils, darkness, etc., are the symbols. But so appropriate and graphic are the symbols, so suggestive of the things, that under their guidance alone we might have been led to discover the events we have been considering. The infidelity of the middle of the 18th century, and its fearful fruit in the enormities of the French Revolution, have long been recognized as the judgment symbolized by the eruption of the "noisome and grievous sore on the men that had the mark of the beast, and worshipped his image," that is on the inhabitants of Papal Christendom. Such an outbreak in the natural body is a mark of deep-seated impurity and disease in the constitution. In the body politic the eruption of violent moral and social evil is the same, an indication of long-continued and all-pervading irreligion and corruption.

THE DECLINE OF TURKISH POWER

The second, third, fourth, and fifth Vials predict, under various symbols, the judgments connected with the Napoleonic and anti-Papal wars which followed the French Revolution; the outpouring of the sixth, brings us to the other event we are seeking, *the decline and fall of the Mohammedan Power*.

The years which have elapsed since the middle of the 18th century have been almost as fatal to the Eastern, as to the Western Little Horn. We have not yet seen the *complete* extinction of the political power of the Sultan, as we have that of the Pope; but it is already *almost* annihilated in Europe; crippled and restricted where it still exists; and events, as well as Scripture

prophecy, indicate that its hold over Syria cannot last much longer.

The rise and fall of the Ottoman Empire are symbolized in the Apocalypse, by the overflow and drying up of the great river Euphrates. In other parts of Scripture the overflow of a river is used as a symbol for the invasion of a land by a foreign conqueror (Jer. xlv. 7; Isa. viii. 7, 8). Sir Edward Creasy's *History of the Ottoman Turks* opens with the following sentence. "Six centuries ago a pastoral band of four hundred Turkish families was journeying westward, *from the upper streams of the river Euphrates*: their armed force consisted of four hundred and forty-four horsemen, and their leader's name was Ertoghrul." This little band of Euphratean horsemen were the ancestors of that terrible host or "army of horsemen two hundred thousand thousand" strong, whom the Seer of Patmos beheld loosed *from the Euphrates*, and overflowing the Roman earth, carrying distress and death wherever they went—the "second woe" sent by God as a judgment on Christendom for its depravity and apostasy.

History tells us how this Euphratean flood covered land after land with its irresistible advance. All over South-Eastern Europe, as far as Venice, the Turkish flood extended. Wherever it reached it carried misery and death, so that even the strong language of Revelation ix. 17 can barely convey an idea of the "woe" it was to Eastern Christendom.

The "drying up" of this flood, that is to say the liberation from Turkish oppression of the Christian nations and lands overwhelmed by it, began with the Greek rebellion in 1820. But fatal blows to the power and prestige of the Ottoman Empire had previously been dealt by Russia. In the war of 1768 between the two

kingdoms, the Turkish armies were destroyed, and ruin and disgrace attended each succeeding campaign. In 1770 the Russian admiral annihilated the Turkish fleet in the Ægean Sea. In 1774 a large Turkish army was again most disgracefully beaten, and the humiliating peace of Kainargé showed that the conqueror was in a position to dictate terms. Three years later, war again broke out between the two Powers, and again the Russians had the mastery both by sea and by land, and obtained the cession of important towns and districts before concluding peace. In 1806 Russia occupied Moldavia and Wallachia, and the old hostility broke out afresh, the weakness of the Ottoman Empire becoming more apparent than ever. A new fleet which had been created was destroyed by the Russians at Lemnos. Mahmoud II. had to buy a peace, by the cession of all his territory north of the Pruth, of a number of fortresses on the Danube, and of a principal mouth of the Danube itself. In 1820 began a formidable insurrection in Greece, which quickly spread to Wallachia, Moldavia, and the Ægean Isles.

In 1826 the Porte surrendered to the Russians all the fortresses it retained in Asia; in the same year civil commotions distracted Constantinople; and the awful slaughter of the Janissaries took place, 4000 soldiers being shot or burned to death in their own barracks in the city, and many thousands more all over the empire, by the Sultan's own command.

The Greek rebellion continued till 1827, when, after a severe and prolonged struggle, Turkey was obliged to acknowledge the independence of Greece. The sympathies of Western Christendom had been aroused by the horrible cruelties perpetrated by the Turkish admiral in the conquest of Scio; and England, France, and

Russia intervened between the Porte and its Greek Christian subjects. At the great naval battle of Navarino, the fleet of Turkey was destroyed, and Greece became independent.

In 1829 the freedom of Servia was similarly secured by a treaty which forbade a single Turk to reside north of the Danube; and the same year the Turkish province of Algeria in Africa became a French colony.

Mehemet Ali, the powerful Pacha of Egypt, who had long been aiming at an hereditary kingdom for himself, rebelled against his master and asserted his independence, in 1832. He attacked and conquered Syria, and defeated the Turkish armies in three great battles. Nothing but the interference of the great Powers of Christendom prevented his marching on Constantinople, and overthrowing the Sultan altogether. He was forced back into his own province, and made again nominally dependent on the Sultan by payment of an annual tribute, and the furnishing certain military aid when asked.

In 1844 the Porte was compelled, under threat of European interference, to issue an edict of religious toleration, abolishing for ever its characteristic and sanguinary practice of execution for apostasy (*i.e.*, for the adoption of Christianity). This compulsory sheathing of its persecuting sword was a proof that its independence was gone, and a marked era in its overthrow.

Nor has it been under the judgment of the sword alone that the Ottoman Empire has been sinking to decay. It is miserably perishing in its own corruption. Internal discord and insurrection, provoked by cruel tyranny and monstrous misgovernment, have weakened the State. Polygamy and other vices have caused a depopulation so rapid as to be almost incredible. Attacks

from without, rebellions from within, and the steady process of internal decay, have reduced Turkey, not only to financial bankruptcy, but to such a state of weakness, that, but for the policy of England and other European States, she must long since have perished.

If foreign interference *should* again avert the end (as it did in the case of the temporal power of the Pope), it can only be for a time. Forces are at work which must ere long destroy the foul tyranny which has so long ruined the fairest regions of the earth; and must set, not Europe only, but Palestine, free from the Moslem rule.¹

The period that has elapsed since the middle of the 18th century, corresponding to the Jewish Captivity period, and closing the 2520 years, or "seven times," of Gentile supremacy, *has then been most conspicuously marked by the decline and fall of the two little horns, the final forms of Gentile rule over the Israel and Sanctuary of God, spiritual and literal.*

And the years of special *crisis* in the former have been, as far as we have gone, answered by corresponding years of crisis in the latter. We have not yet reached the latest *close*; it is not yet 2520 years since the *final* fall of the throne of David, and the *full* establishment of

¹ The anticipations of the author have been realized, in the deliverance of Jerusalem. The significance of this fact is greatly increased by the *time of its occurrence*. The year 1917 was characterized by the author, when writing *Light for the Last Days* in 1887, as "one of the most important, perhaps the most momentous" of the terminal years of crisis. His reason for this conclusion was, that the year 1917 marked the close of *two* long measured periods: from B.C. 604, Nebuchadnezzar's accession, 2520 solar years; and from A.D. 622, the Hegira or Era of Mohammedanism, 1335 lunar years. That the one measure should be in *solar* years, the other in *lunar* years, is in keeping with their respective characters, as Western and Eastern.—ED.

Gentile supremacy by Nebuchadnezzar's overthrow of Jehoiakin; nor have the events predicted as to *close* this time of the end all taken place as yet.

We do not wish to speculate as to the future; of that, as the great Sir Isaac Newton said, "let time be the interpreter." We simply point to facts in the past. No one can question that the sudden and terrible outbreak of infidelity and atheism in the middle of the 18th century, marked by the publications of Rousseau and the Encyclopedists, the accession of the ill-fated king and queen who fell victims to the fury of the French Revolution; the culmination of that awful movement itself in the reign of terror, followed by the overthrow of the Papal power in Italy; and, turning to the East, the compulsory signature by the Sultan of the first edict of religious toleration—no one can question that these have been *marked and critical events* in the downfall of the Papal and Mohammedan Powers. Other indications will shortly lead us to other dates also; but we are already in a position to see that between the critical years of the Captivity era, and the critical years of this time of the end, there lie exactly "seven times,"—2520 years.

One such great "week," traced backwards from the middle of the 18th century, takes us to the reign of Menahem, king of Israel, and the invasion of Pul; the same period, traced back from the accession of Louis XVI., reaches exactly to the accession of Nabonassar, the first king of Babylon; the same period, traced back from the overthrow of the Papal power in the French Revolution, leads up to the overthrow of Samaria by Shalmanezzer; and the same period, traced back from the Turkish edict of toleration, reaches to the completion of the captivity of the Ten Tribes by Esarhaddon.

OPENING AND CLOSING DATES OF THE SEVEN TIMES

I. From the first Assyrian invasion of Palestine (that by Pul, king of Assyria), and the carrying captive a portion of the Ten Tribes, to the outbreak of the grievous sore of infidelity in the middle of the 18th century ¹—

B.C. 770 2520 years. A.D. 1750-1.

II. From the siege and fall of Samaria and more complete captivity of the Ten Tribes by Shalmanezzer, to the judgments on the Papal Power in the French Revolution—

B.C. 723 2520 years. A.D. 1798.

III. From the captivity of Manasseh and the remainder of the Ten Tribes by Esarhaddon, *to the first edict of religious toleration in the East*, issued by the Porte, the compulsory sheathing of its persecuting sword, a sign that its *independence* was gone—

B.C. 676-7 2520 years. A.D. 1844.

IV. From the full captivity of Judah and final overthrow of the throne of David, accomplished by Nebuchadnezzar, to the still future *terminus ad quem* of the prophetic period of 2520 years—

B.C. 598 2520 years. A.D. 1923.

Historically, then, the Times of the Gentiles are a great dispensational week, of 2520 years, extending from the Captivity era, B.C. 770-598, to the era of the closing judgments on the kingdom of the Beast, the Vial era of the Apocalypse, A.D. 1750-1923. It is the "seven times" of Gentile dominion over Israel included in the symbol of Nebuchadnezzar's image.

This great *week* has thus earlier and later commencements, incipient and then full starting points, and corresponding closes, just as in an eclipse, the penumbra first comes in contact, and after a brief interval the

¹ Measured from the accession of Menahem, as the date of this invasion in his brief reign is not given.

dark shadow. This is clearly the case with other chronological prophecies also. Jeremiah announced, for example, that Judah should serve the king of Babylon "seventy years" (Jer. xxv. 11, 12). History shows that this period had a double commencement and a double termination,—a *two-fold fulfilment*. First, from B.C. 606 to the decree of Cyrus, and again from B.C. 587 to the edict of Darius. This is easily explicable. The majestic movements of Providence and of history demand time; empires do not rise and fall in a day; and the omniscient God takes note of the comparatively insignificant *beginning* of a mighty movement as well as of its climax. We are witnesses that the decay of the Papal and Mohammedan Powers demands *an era*, not an epoch merely; and such has been the case with the decay of other great Powers in other ages. Hence the propriety of indicating *various dates of rise and fall*. But it should be noted that the interval by which the earliest of these commencing and closing dates is separated from the latest is, *compared to the whole period*, so small as to be scarcely perceptible, so that it is even difficult to represent it to scale on a diagram. Thus the statement that at the equinox the day is twelve hours long is practically true of a day or two *before*, and of a day or two *after* the equinox, because the *variation is, compared to the length of the day*, hardly observable.

But while the measures of this great dispensational week are sufficiently clear when we consider its main termini, they become increasingly so when we proceed to study its bisections and divisions. The measures of the whole week are evident; but those of the half week, the "time, times, and a half" of prophecy, are still more so, and these we must now examine.

CHAPTER V

THE BISECTION ERA OF THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES

THE *whole week*, or “seven times,” dates from the era of the rise of the *literal* Babylon, and measures the entire course of the four great monarchies; the *half week*, or “time, times, and a half,” dates from the era of the rise of the *spiritual* Babylon, and measures the existence of the great apostasies which occupy the latter half of the “Times of the Gentiles.” When did these arise?

The Papal Power rose in the interval between the fall of the Western Roman Empire, under Romulus Augustulus, and the Pope-exalting decrees of the Eastern Emperors Justinian and Phocas, which put the topstone on the slowly rising arch of Papal pretension and power, by constituting the Bishops of Rome Universal Bishops, and making them heads of all Christendom. And the Mohammedan Power rose in the East during the very same interval; for, as Luther used to say, “the Pope and the Turk came up together.” The fall of the Western Empire took place in A.D. 476, and the Hegira era of the Mohammedans is A.D. 622.

The century and a half intervening between these dates may be called *the era of the rise of the Western and Eastern Apostasies*. It embraces nearly all the main stages of the rise of the two Little Horns; it is analogous in character and in duration to the Captivity

era, and it is central in position in the great "seven times."

1. It is analogous in *character*, for the Captivity era was one of decay and fall to the natural Israel, and one during which the power and dominion of the natural Babylon was rising steadily to its culmination in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. This central era of the rise of the apostasies is one of decay and fall to the spiritual Israel, the true Church of Christ, and one during which the power and dominion of the spiritual Babylon was rising steadily to its culmination in the enthronement of the Papal dynasty at Rome.

2. It is analogous also in *duration*, for from the era of Nabonassar to the overthrow of Jehoiakim is 146 solar, or 150 lunar years, and from the fall of the Western Empire of Rome (A.D. 476), to the date of the Hegira (A.D. 622) is exactly the same period.

3. It is central in position in the great "seven times." The intervals which separate the commencement and completion of the Captivity era from the commencement and completion of this central era are respectively 1260 lunar years; and the intervals which separate these latter dates from the corresponding dates of the "time of the end" are also respectively 1260 years.

That this central era is the bisection of "seven times" has long been perceived in a general way by students of prophecy; but it is only by the application to the period of careful astronomical measures that the wonderful accuracy and exactness with which this is the case can be demonstrated.

Three sorts of years are, it must be premised, employed by the Author of the prophetic periods: solar, calendar, and lunar years. Calendar years, or years of 360 days, are used in the predictions of Daniel and the

Apocalypse; for it is only three and a half *such* years that contain 1260 days.

Solar and lunar years are also taken into account, as is proved by the fact that in Daniel xii. 75 years are added to 2520; and 75 is exactly the difference between 2520 *solar* years and 2520 *lunar* years.

We have a warrant therefore for measuring historic intervals by *any or all of these three standards*; and where, for any reason, it is the Divine purpose to conceal for a time, or partially, the actual measures of any interval, we may expect to find the *lunar* year employed in measuring it, inasmuch as this year gives rise to what may be termed a hidden chronology.

Before going further, it will be well to inquire what were the *critical years* in this era of the rise of the Papal and Mohammedan Powers. We are in the broad sunlight of profane history here; there may be room for some difference of judgment as to the relative importance of certain events in the history, but there can be no question at all as to the dates of the events selected.

"He that letteth," or that which hindereth the development of the great apostasy, "will let, until he be taken out of the way," said the Apostle Paul; and *then* the Antichrist will be revealed (2 Thess. ii.). There could be no chance for Popes while the Cæsars still ruled at Rome. The first step in the rise of the Papacy therefore was necessarily the complete *downfall* of the *Western Empire of Rome*, which took place under Romulus Augustulus, in A.D. 476. From that time the claims of the Bishops of Rome increased continually, based at first on the metropolitan character of the See of Rome, and by degrees on more supernatural and spiritual grounds. But their claims to supremacy over other bishops received no *legal sanction* until A.D. 533, when, by

his celebrated decretal letters, the Eastern Roman Emperor Justinian *recognized* the Bishop of Rome as "*head of all the holy Churches, and all the holy priests of God.*"

Seventy-five years later, in A.D. 607, the Emperor Phocas promulgated another very notable decree, *confirming* the right of the Pope to the headship of all the Churches, *Eastern as well as Western*, and acknowledging him *primate of all other sees, that of Constantinople included*. In 608 Phocas bestowed upon the Pope the Pantheon of Rome, a temple formerly dedicated to Cybele and all the gods, and thenceforth to the Virgin Mary and all the martyrs; that is, formerly devoted to Pagan, and thenceforth to Papal *idolatry*. Phocas died in A.D. 610. In 1813 the base of a pillar was excavated in Rome, bearing an inscription intimating that it was erected in honour of Phocas in A.D. 608, on the occasion of these his great concessions to the Pope.

The accession of the assassin Phocas was "joyfully" endorsed by Pope Gregory the Great,¹ *whose own accession* in A.D. 590 constitutes a very leading date in the rise of the Papacy. Gregory the Great was "the last of the Latin Fathers, and *the first, in the modern sense of the word, of the Popes,*" and he "did more than any other to set the Church forward upon the new lines on which thenceforth it must travel to constitute a Latin Christianity, with distinctive features of its own, such as broadly separate it from Greek."²

One more remarkable step in the rise of the Papacy, and the extending over Europe of its peculiar evil influence, must be noticed. It is the decree of the Pope *Vitalian*, ordering all the services of the Church throughout Christendom to be read in *Latin*,—a decree,

¹ Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, chap. xlv.

² Archbishop Trench, *Mediæval Church History*.

as we know, still in fatal force, and obeyed by every Roman Catholic priest in the world. This was in the year A.D. 663. It gave a distinctly Roman, or Latin, character to the Church, secured perfect unity with Rome in all its ceremonial, and was surely one way in which the Beast "caused all to receive his mark and the number of his name" (LATEINOS=666). From the time of the division of the Roman Empire, the Western half, indeed, received the designation Latin, in opposition to "Greek," which, strangely enough, was soon applied by the Eastern Roman Emperors to themselves and their empire. In the West the word Roman was also dropped; it was the *Latin* world, the *Latin* kingdoms, the *Latin* Church, the *Latin* clergy, the *Latin* patriarch, the *Latin* councils. Gibbon, who is so accurate in his word-painting, always applies this epithet to the Western Papal kingdoms. "'They Latinize in everything,' to use Dr. More's words: 'mass, prayers, hymns, litanies, canons, decretals, bulls, are conceived in Latin. The Papal councils speak in Latin; the Scripture is read in no other language under Popery than Latin; in short, all things are Latin.'" ¹ From the time of Vitalian's decree, public worship itself throughout the whole of Papal Christendom was in Latin only. Hence the truth and worship of God became mere unmeaning sounds to the mass of the people in all lands, and the power of the Papal priesthood proportionately increased.

We take then as the main epochs of the rise of the *Papal Power*—

- | | |
|---|---------|
| 1. The decretal letter of Justinian . . . | 533 |
| 2. The accession of Gregory the Great . . . | 590 |
| 3. The edicts and donations of Phocas . . . | 607-610 |
| 4. The Latinizing decree of Vitalian . . . | 663 |

¹ Elliott, *Horæ Apocalypticæ*, iii. 253.

The main points or epochs in the rise of the Eastern Little Horn, the *Mohammedan Power*,—which sprang up during the same era, spread with extraordinary rapidity, attained enormous influence, and wielded it to the misery and destruction of the Christian nations subjugated by it,—are two.

1. The Hegira, or flight of Mohammed from Mecca to Medina, the turning-point in the career of the false prophet, which transformed him from the despised leader of a sect of fanatics to the prince and prophet of his people.

2. The capture of Jerusalem and Syria by the Caliph Omar, when a mosque was erected on the site of Solomon's temple, from which that Muezzin call to prayer which has never since ceased (save for a brief interval in the time of the Crusaders) was first heard in the city. It was on this occasion that Sophronius, the unhappy patriarch of Jerusalem, muttered as he followed the victorious Caliph round the sacred sites, "The abomination of desolation stands in the holy place."

The ten years of the Caliphate of Omar from A.D. 634 to A.D. 644 were years of rapid extension of Mohammedan power. The Saracens during their course reduced to obedience 36,000 cities or strongholds, destroyed 4000 Christian churches, and built 1400 mosques.

"At the end of the first century of the Hegira the Arabian empire had been extended to 200 days' journey from East to West; and reached from the confines of Tartary and India to the shores of the Atlantic. 'Over all which ample space,' says Gibbon, 'the progress of the Mahommedan religion diffused a general resemblance of manners and of opinions':—over all which ample space, we may add, the venom of the scorpion-sting of their conquerors was made to rankle in the breasts of the subject Christians.

“For indeed the bitter contempt and hatred flowing out from the Moslem faith towards them could not but be felt perpetually. It was marked in the very terms of appellation, Christian dogs and infidels. Deprived of the use of arms, like the Helots of old, and with tribute enforced as their annual life-redemption tax,—with a different dress enjoined them from their masters, and a more humble mode of riding,—an obligation to rise up deferentially in the presence of the meanest Moslem, and to receive, and gratuitously entertain for a certain time, whosoever of them when on a journey might require it,—such were the marks of *personal* degradation ordained in the Capitulations. And then, in token of the degradation of *their religion*,—that to which, notwithstanding all their superstitions, they clung with fond attachment,—there was the prohibition to build new churches, to chime the bells in those retained by them, or to refuse admission into them to the scoffing Moslem, though they regarded his presence as defilement. Add to which the inducements to *apostasy*, and then the penalty of death against the apostates returning to the Christian faith, the insults too to Christian females, and thousand undefinable injuries of oppressions;—and how could it be but that the bitterness of their lot should be felt, and the poison rankle within them, yet more even than in other days with the Jewish captives in Babylon, and so as to make life itself almost a burden?”¹

The two principal *Mohammedan* dates of commencement then are—

- | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|----------|
| 1. The Hegira | ... | ... | ... | ... | A.D. 622 |
| 2. Omar's capture of Jerusalem | ... | ... | ... | ... | A.D. 637 |

Now let it be observed

1. That from the accession of Nabonassar, the first

¹ Elliott, *Horæ Apocalypticæ*, i. 449.

King of Babylon, to the deposition of Romulus Augustulus, the last Emperor of Rome, was *to a day* 1260 lunar years.

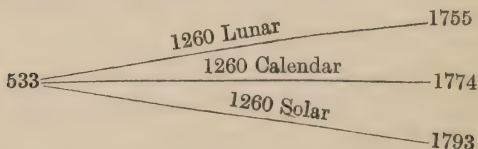
2. That from the overthrow of Jehoiakim by Nebuchadnezzar (B.C. 602) to the Hegira of Mohammed is also 1260 lunar years.

3. That from Nebuchadnezzar's burning of the temple, in the 19th year of his reign (B.C. 587), to Omar's capture of Jerusalem (A.D. 637), followed by the erection of a mosque that bears his name on the site of the temple, is again 1260 lunar years.

4. That from the Mohammedan era of Hegira to the important crisis in the *decay and fall* of Mohammedan power before alluded to, the end of its independence and *legalized* intolerance in A.D. 1844, is once more 1260 years lunar,—and it should be remembered that the Mohammedan reckoning is lunar.

5. That from the Pope-exalting decree of Justinian, A.D. 533, which constituted the Bishop of Rome head of all the Churches, 1260 years reckoned as lunar, as calendar, and as solar, lead respectively to the important initial and critical dates of the French revolution; thus:—

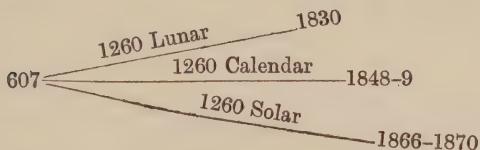
A.D. 533, Justinian's decretal letter



6. That from the decree of the Emperor Phocas, confirming the primacy of the See of Rome over that of Constantinople and all the Eastern and Western Churches, 1260 years measured in the same three ways lead respec-

tively to the three great modern overthrows of Papal power of which we have spoken: the revolutions of 1830, 1848-9, and 1866-70.

A.D. 607-10. Phocas—



7. That measured from the important *central* date of the accession of Pope Gregory the Great, September 3, A.D. 590, the *first, properly speaking, of the Popes*, the 1260th *solar* year commences in September 1849, which year is the terminus of 1260 *calendar* years from the decree of Phocas.

8. That from the captivity of Jehoiachin, and the final overthrow of Judah in B.C. 598, 1260 solar years lead to the promulgation of the decree of Vitalian that the services of the Church throughout Christendom should be performed in Latin, A.D. 663. This latter date is, consequently, the *bisection* of "seven times" in solar years, as reckoned from the date of the final overthrow of the throne of Judah, and 1260 solar years from that point do not run out until the year A.D. 1923.

9. Further, from the capture of Jerusalem by Omar, A.D. 637, 1260 *calendar* years bring us to the recent overthrow of Turkey by Russia, and the Treaty of Berlin; the Anglo-Turkish Convention as to Cyprus, and the English protectorate of Asia Minor, unquestionably a fresh stage in the downfall of the Mohammedan power. From the same date, 1260 solar years run out in 1897.

It may be asked, How is it that, if the fulfilment of these chronological prophecies be thus clearly traceable, the fact has not been earlier perceived?

We reply, It is the revealed purpose of God that, for wise and gracious reasons, these chronological prophecies *should* become clear only in the "time of the end" (Dan. xii.).

In fulfilment of this design, not only is a symbolic system of predicting events and their duration adopted, but even when the chronological symbol employed is rightly translated on the year-day system, it is not necessarily clear *what kind of year* is the *reality*, for which a day is the *symbol*; hence the true length of the predicted period may still be to a certain extent hidden.

Some of the above periods are accurate even to a day when calculated by the true lunar year, though they present only distant approximations to accuracy when measured by the solar year.

But while comprehension of these Divine prophecies was impossible until partial fulfilment had given the true clue in the year-day system, and while the periods predicted still remained obscure even when the clue was obtained, their true scope has become clearer and clearer as each successive generation of students has searched into their meaning, till now, in the light of such fulfilments as the loss of temporal power by the Papacy, and the present and imminent loss of power by the Ottoman Empire,—in the clear glow of light shed by fulfilments in this end of the age, and by the discovery of the astronomic measures of these mysterious times, *the whole series seem to range themselves into order and proportion*, and to present no longer a hopeless, puzzling, and intricate maze, but a complete, majestic, and clearly traceable plan.

CHRONOLOGICAL MEASURES OF THE PATRIARCHAL AGE AND THE JEWISH DISPENSATION

It remains now to show that each of the two earlier dispensations lasted for a period similar to the Times of the Gentiles, and consisted of a great week of years—"seven times."

It should be noted that Christianity, the religious system which has distinctively characterized the Times of the Gentiles, did not take its rise at their commencement, but when they had already run a third of their course. The rise of Christianity dates, not from the overthrow of Jewish independence in the Captivity era, but from the period of the abolition of Judaism, just before the fall of the city and temple of Jerusalem. Similarly Judaism, the distinctively characteristic religion of the previous or second great dispensation, dates not from its commencement, but from *Sinai*, the giving of the law, the point where the Patriarchal dispensation closes. And just as the Times of the Gentiles had an earlier commencement than Christianity, so the Jewish race and their special covenant privileges had an earlier origin than the giving of the law. *In each case a people was first prepared to receive the new system of religious truth, and then the system was revealed.* Thus, as represented in the diagram,¹ the dispensations overlapped; the second grew out of the first, and the third out of the second. The earliest date of the origin of the third is, as we have seen, the beginning of the Jewish Captivities, the invasion of Pul, in the reign of Menahem, whose accession was in B.C. 770,—840 years before the destruction of Jerusalem and the triumph of Titus, celebrated at Rome A.D. 70-71. Now 840 years is one-

¹ P. 252.

third of 2520 years; the Times of the Gentiles took their rise one-third of "seven times" before the passing away of Judaism. We naturally inquire, Is any parallel fact observable in connection with the previous dispensation? Did the origin of the Abrahamic race precede the giving of the Law, by any such period?

The call of Abram preceded the Exodus by 430 years: "the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the Law, which was 430 *years after*, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect" (Gal. iii. 17). The birth of the Patriarch preceded his call by seventy-five years, and Abram the Hebrew was himself descended from *Shem*, and with his race inherited the blessing of that pre-eminently blessed son of Noah; *his* was the specially privileged branch of the great Shemitic family. Now the blessing of Shem *immediately followed the flood*; it dates from the recommencement of human history after the first great judgment of the world by water. Measuring, then, the Shemitic dispensation, or that of the Jewish people and their fathers, from this primary epoch, to the time of Messiah's Advent and rejection, we find that another great "seven times" intervened; that, as nearly as we can ascertain, such a week of years of years divided these great termini from each other.

It must be borne in mind, that the two inevitable gaps in the world's chronology occur in the course of this Shemitic or Jewish age, so that certainty, to within forty or fifty years, is unattainable. The date of the Flood is A.M. 1656, which, according to Clinton's chronology is B.C. 2482. Adding twenty-nine years—to reach the date of the Crucifixion,—it will be seen that the latter event took place 2510 years after the Flood, that is, only ten years less than the full "seven times," or 2520 years. Now it must be borne in mind that their rejection of

Messiah the Prince did not cause at once the final rejection of Israel by God. For some years subsequently the ministry of the Holy Ghost by the Apostles appealed to them to repent and be converted, that the times of refreshing might come from the presence of the Lord. Ten or fifteen years later the sentence was pronounced by Paul and Barnabas, "It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commandeth us" (Acts xiii. 46). Allowing therefore a few years for this final hovering of the Spirit of mercy and longsuffering over the guilty race, we may say that 2520 years, "seven times," elapsed between the bestowment of distinctive privilege on the race of Shem, and the utter rejection of the Jewish people and transference of the kingdom of God to the Gentiles. It should be remembered that this is no question of brief periods; it is a question of a period of over *twenty-five centuries*; so that an inaccuracy of two or three years would scarcely affect the conclusion.

Absolute accuracy is in this case unattainable; the terminal event of the Shemitic or Jewish "seven times" may have been the Crucifixion itself, or it may have been the crisis indicated above, or it may have been the subsequent destruction of Jerusalem. There is no need to fix on any one of these, in order to recognize the broad fact, which is beyond dispute, that the Shemitic or Jewish age extended over a great week of prophetic times, exactly as does the succeeding dispensation, the Times of the Gentiles.

The first, or patriarchal dispensation, had a similar duration. "*From Adam to Moses*," when there was "*no law*," i.e., from the Creation to Sinai, 2514 years

elapsed, for the date of the Exodus (according to Clinton) A.M. 2513, and the giving of the Law followed the Exodus, so that the "seven times" terminated within seven years of the Exodus. We may therefore boldly say that from Adam to Moses was "*seven times*"; from the incipient rise of the Hebrew nation and their peculiar privileges, to their utter rejection and fall, was "*seven times*"; and from the recognition by God of Gentile monarchy, down to its final overthrow, is also "*seven times*." The three dispensations so clearly distinguished by their broad *moral* features, and marked off by their critical termini (the greatest events of all human history), are *three great weeks chronologically equal to each other*. Taking the prophetic "time" (360 years) as the unit, the first contained *seven* such; the second contained *seven* such; and the third contains *seven* such.

Symmetrical subdivisions of these great periods seem also clearly traceable. The second is divided into thirds, the last into halves. The Exodus marks the first third of the Shemitic or Jewish age, the Captivity era the second, and the fall of Jerusalem the close; the three periods representing respectively the rise, the prosperity, and the decay and fall, of the Jewish nation. The golden headship of the Babylonian power marks the rise of the Times of the Gentiles, the *first* half of which is occupied by the four great Pagan Empires of antiquity, and the *last* by the domination of the "little horn," or Papal dynasty, for "time, times, and a half," 1260 years. The chronological harmony between these three great dispensations, or stages of progress, in the providential dealings of God with man, is of profound interest, especially when viewed in relation to the other scriptural uses of the week, and in relation to its prominence in natural and vital phenomena.

Owing to the *ingrafting* of these three dispensations, their total duration is between 5880 and 6000 years. This commencement of a succeeding dispensation before the termination of a previous one seems natural and appropriate, when the relation between them is remembered. Their connection is not one of mere succession, but one of intimate relation, and of vital *growth*. The mature years of the parent coincide with the infancy and youth of the child; indeed, there is always a period in which the lives of the mother and child are not twain, but one. So in the chronological arrangements of the law, one year began while another was still in progress, so that the two overlapped for several months. The Year of Jubilee, for instance, commenced in the midst of the ordinary current year, on the tenth day of the seventh month, the great Day of Atonement (Lev. xxv.).

The moral distinctions between the three dispensations are clearly pointed out in Scripture; the great crises in human history which form their respective termini are fully narrated, the dates of the events and their duration are duly given, and the measures of the last are not indistinctly intimated in prophecy; but it is nowhere *stated* that human history has been providentially divided into three great weeks of seven prophetic times each; we are left to discover, from what is stated, what is *not* stated,—the plan that underlies the whole chronology of the Bible, and the harmony of that plan with the plan observable in nature, organic and inorganic. We are furnished with a clue, and then left to explore the labyrinth.

That there should be this analogy between *the mode* of God's revelation of His ways in nature, and in Scripture, is what might have been expected, even were

no special reason assignable why, in the matter of the chronology of the ages, peculiar reserve should be employed. But, the purpose of God to conceal the fore-ordained duration of this Christian age from all save the later generations of His people is very distinctly intimated. "Shut up the vision and seal the book, even to the time of the end." "The words are closed up and sealed, even to the time of the end." The intimations which exist of the uniform and septiform measures of the three dispensations were therefore purposely slight and indirect, unlikely to attract attention in early days, or to be even surmised, till the fulfilment of the great prophetic "time, times, and a half" had so far progressed, as to illumine with fresh light the entire book of chronologic prophecy.

And further, not only is the whole plan and system an underlying and half-hidden one, but even when perceived the providential gaps in Bible chronology necessarily prevent its being demonstrated, with that absolute evidence which would place it beyond dispute, or with that accuracy which would justify any prediction of "that day and that hour." "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power," said our Master to His early disciples, when they inquired as to the time of the restoration of the kingdom to Israel. He did not abate their confident expectation that such a restoration was to take place; He implied, on the contrary, that the time and the season for it were appointed, but intimated that with that time and season *they* were not to become acquainted. A revelation of nineteen centuries of delay would have been a test of faith and patience too severe to be imposed on the infant Church: a merciful veil of mystery was thrown over the subject, and the return of their Lord,

after a longer or shorter delay, was the one hope and prospect left to the early disciples. But ages before, the promise had been given that in the time of the end the wise should understand the mysteries of chronologic prophecy (Dan. xii. 10, 11); and the promise has been fulfilled. Revelations that were dark to the fathers are radiant with light to us; and the perception of the true nature of the year-day system, and of the septiform measures of the Divine dispensations, so far from discouraging faith and hope, *now* only stimulate both. We humbly venture to regard the view unfolded in this chapter, of the uniform and harmonious ordering of the ages of human history, by the law of completion in weeks, as a fresh instance of progressive interpretation, another example of the way in which God, who is His own interpreter, makes plain in due time the meaning of His own Word.

CHAPTER VI

SOLAR AND LUNAR MEASURES OF TIME

DISCOVERIES OF M. DE CHESEAUX

WE have already called attention to the proofs afforded by science, of the dominion exercised by the sun and moon, both over the organic and inorganic creations.

We now turn to the second aspect of solar and lunar dominion, and show the importance of these two great luminaries, in the regulation of times and seasons.

The three great tasks assigned to the sun and moon in the first chapter of Genesis are to rule, to give light, and to *divide*; to mark out the boundaries that separate day from night, month from month, year from year. The sun and moon are thus constituted principal hands of the divinely constructed chronometer, by which, in all its course, terrestrial time is measured.

So obvious are the *main* revolutions of these “great lights,” that in all ages men have divided time by their means. But this is not all; they have in addition less obvious cycles, which have been divinely employed as chronological measures.

Of these cycles we shall have much to say presently; and it is not in connection with them alone, that we employ soli-lunar reckoning; our ordinary computation of time is soli-lunar. Our calendar is neither purely solar—

regulated by the sun alone ; nor is it wholly lunar—regulated by the moon alone ; but it is *solι-lunar*—regulated by both, adapted to the motions of both sun and moon.

The *day*, measured by the revolutions of the earth on her axis, and marked by the apparent diurnal revolution of the entire heavens,—contains twenty-four hours, and is the fundamental measure of time.

The *month*, or interval between one new moon and another, occasioned by the moon's revolution in her orbit, contains 29 days, 12 hours, 44 minutes, and 3 seconds.

The *year*, or apparent course of the sun round the earth, from any given point in his orbit to the same point again, occupies 12 months, 10 days, 21 hours ; or 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes, and 49 seconds.

How many days make a month ? How many months make a year ? In either case the answer involves a *fraction*, and the fraction involves more practical difficulty than can be easily conceived by the uninitiated.

The perplexities and difficulties which encumber the attempt to adapt *brief* periods of time to both solar and lunar movements, as in the calendar, disappear when it is a question of *longer* intervals.

Short periods have to be artificially harmonized, longer ones harmonize themselves. There exist various times and seasons, which are *naturally* measurable both by solar years, and lunar months, without remainder, or with remainders so small as to be unimportant.

Such periods are therefore *solι-lunar cycles*, and we shall henceforth speak of them as such. They harmonize, with more or less exactness, solar and lunar revolutions ; and they may be regarded as divinely-appointed units for the measurement of long periods of time, units of precisely the same *character* as the day, month, and year (created that is by solar, lunar, and terrestrial

revolutions), but of larger *dimensions*. They are therefore periods distinctly marked off as such, on the same principles as those on which our calendar is based; that is, they are natural measures of time, furnished by the Creator Himself for human use. Their discovery has always been an object with astronomers, as their practical utility is considerable. But it was exceedingly difficult to find cycles of any tolerable accuracy, especially cycles combining and harmonizing the day and the month, with the year.

About the middle of the eighteenth century a remarkable fact was discovered by a Swiss astronomer, M. de Cheseaux, a fact which is full of the deepest interest to the Christian mind.

The prophetic periods of 1260 years and 2300 years, assigned in the Book of Daniel, and in the Apocalypse, as the duration of certain predicted events, *are soli-lunar cycles*, cycles of remarkable accuracy, whose existence was entirely unknown to astronomers until, guided by sacred Scripture, M. de Cheseaux discovered and demonstrated them to be such. And further, the difference between these two periods, which is 1040 years, is *the largest accurate soli-lunar cycle known*.

M. de Cheseaux was engaged in some chronological researches, and in order to fix with certainty the date of the Crucifixion, he was led to examine certain parts of Scripture, and especially the Book of Daniel. He saw that the "time, times, and a half" of Daniel vii. meant a period of 1260 years. "The importance of this conclusion," he says, "will be perceived, when we show how it led to a discovery of the singular relation which exists between this period of Daniel, and the facts of astronomy. However strange it may seem, I can positively deduce from the periods of Daniel, as accurately as by the best

astronomical methods, and even *more* so, the five elements of the solar theory."

He goes on to explain what a *cycle* is: "a period which brings into harmony different celestial revolutions, containing a certain definite number of each without remainder or fraction," and he shows there are four different kinds of cycles connected with the sun, moon, and earth.

1. Those harmonizing the solar *day* and *year*.
2. Those harmonizing the solar *year* and lunar *month*.
3. Those harmonizing the solar *day* and lunar *month*.
4. Those harmonizing all three, day, month, and year.

M. de Cheseaux adds, that astronomers and chronologists have almost laid it down as a principle that it is impossible to find cycles of the fourth class. "It has been thus far," he says, "a kind of philosopher's stone in astronomy, like perpetual movement in mechanics."

M. de Cheseaux then describes the process by which he was led to the discovery that 315 years is such a soli-lunar cycle, *ten times more exact* than the 19 years Metonic cycle in use by the ancients; the sun and moon coming after a lapse of that period to within three hours, twenty-four seconds of absolute agreement.

He had no sooner discovered this cycle, than he observed it was a *quarter of the 1260 years of Daniel and the Apocalypse*, and that consequently, *this period is itself a soli-lunar cycle*, after which the sun and moon return, within less than half a degree, to the same point of the ecliptic precisely, and that within an hour of each other.¹

¹ That is, after 460,205 days, 6 hours, the sun and moon come into conjunction, and in 460,205 days, 7 hours, 23 minutes, the sun has returned to its exact starting-point on the ecliptic—a period of 1260 solar years. (According to more accurate modern measures 1260 years are about three hours less.)

The agreement of *this* period, assigned by the Holy Spirit as the limit of certain political events, with the most notable periods of celestial movement, made him think it might be the same with the 2300 years. By the aid of the astronomic tables he examined this latter, and found that at the end of 2300 Gregorian years, minus six hours, fourteen minutes, the sun and the moon return to within half a degree of the place from which they started; and that an hour later the sun has reached its exact starting-point on the ecliptic: whence it follows that the prophetic period of 2300 years, also remarkable for the number of its aliquot parts, and for containing a complete number of cycles, is a cyclical period; and *one so perfect, that though it is thirty times longer than the cycle of Calippus, it has an error of only thirteen hours, a seventeenth part of the error of that ancient cycle.*

The equality of the errors of these two cycles of 1260 and 2300 years led him to conclude, that the difference between them, 1040 years, ought to be a perfect cycle, free from all error; and all the more remarkable as uniting the three kinds of cycles, and furnishing consequently a cycle of that fourth kind, so long sought in vain, and finally concluded to be impossible to find.

On examination of this period of 1040 years by the best astronomic tables, *he found that it was even so.* Its error was absolutely imperceptible, in so long a period, and might indeed be accounted for by errors in the tables themselves, owing to the inaccuracy of some of the ancient observations on which they are founded.

This period of 1040 years, indicated indirectly by the Holy Ghost, was found to be *a cycle at once solar, lunar, and diurnal or terrestrial, of the most perfect accuracy*; and M. de Cheseaux proposed to give it the name of the Daniel Cycle.

M. de Cheseaux continues, "As I before said, a cycle of this kind has long been sought in vain; no astronomer or chronologist has been able to light upon one for nineteen centuries; and yet for two thousand three hundred years there it has been, written in characters legible enough, in the Book of Daniel: legible, that is, to him who was willing to take the trouble of comparing the great prophetic periods with the movements of the heavenly bodies; in other words, to him, *who compared the book of nature with the book of revelation*.

"The slightest error, even of a few seconds, in the determination of the true length of the solar year, would remove altogether from these numbers their cyclical character. Only the perfection of modern astronomical instruments, in fact, can demonstrate it at all. So that we have the problem, how did Daniel, or the author of the Book of Daniel, whoever he was (if, as some assert, the prophecy is of later date than Daniel), light upon these undiscoverable and undiscovered, yet excessively accurate celestial cycles, at a time when there were no instruments in existence capable of measuring solar revolutions with sufficient accuracy to reveal the cyclical character of the periods?"

M. de Cheseaux adds, "I must close with one observation. For many ages the Book of Daniel, and especially these passages of it, have been quoted and commented on by numerous and varied authors, so that it is impossible to call in question their antiquity. Who can have taught their author the marvellous relation of the periods he selected with soli-lunar revolutions? Is it possible, considering all these points, to fail to recognize in the author of the Book of Daniel the Creator of the heavens and all their hosts, of the earth and the things that are therein?"

Such were M. de Cheseaux's discoveries; and they are of the deepest interest and importance, as manifesting, in a new light, the wisdom and glory of God in connection with his Holy Word.

For it is certain that these periods *are* accurate celestial cycles:¹ it is equally certain that neither Daniel nor John was able to calculate these cycles, or was even aware of their existence. There was no such exact knowledge of the true length either of the solar year, or of the lunar month, as would have made the discovery of these cycles *possible*.

It was therefore certainly not as moved by their own intelligence that the sacred writers selected these periods; and if they were not moved by Divine inspiration, how is the fact of their use of them to be accounted for?

In what follows, we shall endeavour to unfold further remarkable links of connection between the chronology of Scripture, historic and prophetic, and the cycles of soli-lunar revolution.

¹ Dr. W. Bell Dawson, of Ottawa, has followed up the calculations of M. de Cheseaux and of the author, and in a paper read before the Royal Society of Canada in 1905, he brings out some very remarkable facts, showing the unique character of the periods found in Daniel, considered as celestial cycles. He gives a table in which well-known cycles, of various types, are compared as regards accuracy with three cycles deduced from the prophetic numbers in the Book of Daniel. "We may dismiss from consideration," he adds, with reference to further calculations, "the cycles which have a lower degree of accuracy than one day in 10,000 years. *It is only the three cycles, one of each type, derived from the numbers in the Book of Daniel, which come up to this requirement. These cycles may be considered as perfect from the point of view of human time-reckoning; as their error is only a fraction of a day in the human period.*" One of these cycles is the "Daniel cycle" of M. de Cheseaux, 1040 years.—ED. [Italics mine.—ED.]

CHAPTER VII

THE PROPHECIC TIMES AND THEIR EPACTS

PROPHECY, which occupies about a third of the Bible, threw its light beforehand, as we have seen, on all the events of importance which were to befall the typical and antitypical Israels, and the empires, nations, and powers with which in the course of their long earthly histories they were to be brought more especially into contact. One large group of prophecies range themselves around the rise of the Jewish people, and a similar group cluster around its fall. The majority of these sacred predictions have in them no chronological element, but in several, statements of time are embodied. The predictions we have now to pass in review, are the chronological prophecies delivered about the time of the *fall* of the Jewish nation, by Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Daniel. Some of these prophecies are literal, and some symbolic. In the literal predictions, the chronological statements are made in plain terms; while in the symbolic, they are expressed on the year-day system, in harmony with the nature of the prophecy. The former generally relate to events near at hand, and were given for the benefit of the generation which received them, or of the immediately succeeding generations; while the latter foretell a remote future, and were given, less for the benefit of the men of that age, than for our admonition, on whom the ends of the world are come.

To the prophet who was privileged to receive these wonderful Divine revelations of the future, and to behold in vision mystic symbols of events to take place in the time of the end, it was said concerning them, "Thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end"; and to others, as well as to this greatest of all chronological prophets, "it was revealed, that not unto themselves but unto us, they did minister" in their prophecies concerning "the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow." These mystic revelations were not designed to be fully understood until after the lapse of ages, when the fulfilment of a portion should have thrown light on the meaning of the remainder; hence they were given in symbolic language, and their chronology expressed on the year-day system.

In this second class of prophecies are comprised Daniel's predictions as to the duration of the restored Jewish polity after the Babylonish captivity; the period to elapse before the Advent and death of Messiah the Prince, and the subsequent destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, the rejection of the Jewish people, and the desolation of their Sanctuary; the long course of the Times of the Gentiles, with the events marking the close of that great dispensation; the resurrection of the dead; and the final blessedness of the righteous.

Thus, from the time of the prophet Daniel, right on over the first and second Advents of Christ, and over all the intervening events, these far-reaching and majestic prophecies throw their Divine light, showing both the close of the Jewish economy, and the end of the Christian dispensation, and fixing beforehand, in mystic terms, the chronological limits of both.

They were not given for the wicked to understand,

but for "the wise" to ponder in their hearts, and at the time of the end, when knowledge should be increased, to comprehend with ever-growing clearness.

The predictions of the first, or literal class, which we shall have to consider are—

1. That recorded in Isaiah vii. 8; the "sixty and five years" foretold by the prophet as to the end in the cutting off of *Israel's* national existence by their Assyrian conquerors.

2. That given in Jeremiah xxv. 11, and xxix. 10; the "seventy years" twice predicted as the predetermined duration of that Babylonish captivity which was sent upon *Judah* as a punishment for sin.

3. The "thousand years" of the Millennial reign of Christ: Rev. xx.

Those of the second, or symbolic class, include—

1. The "seventy weeks," or 490 years, foretold by Daniel as the interval destined to elapse between the *rebuilding of Jerusalem* and the Advent and atoning work of the Messiah: Dan. ix.

2. The 2300 years, similarly predicted as the long-extended period which would elapse before the final *cleansing of the Sanctuary*: Dan. viii.

3. The 1260 years predicted domination of the "little horn," which is the assigned duration of other events also. This period is the base of several others. It is a half-week; "time, times, and a half"; so we must consider the week of which it is half, the "seven times," or 2520 years, of Gentile dominion: and it receives in Daniel xii. two additions, of 30 and 45 years; so it must be studied both alone, and *with its addenda*, that is, as 1290 and 1335 years.

A little consideration will show harmonious relations between these apparently incongruous periods.

Of all these periods the *root* is evidently *the week of years*, the seven years which, under the Levitical economy, extended from one sabbatic year to another.

The *two principal* of these periods, the 2520 years, and the 2300 years, relate respectively to the *Throne* and to the *Sanctuary*; the one is *civil*, the other *sacred*, in character.

Harmonious relations subsist therefore among these periods, and between them and the *legal and ceremonial times* established under the Mosaic economy.

We proceed to consider them in detail.

THE SIXTY-FIVE YEARS OF ISAIAH VII. 8

Early in the reign of Ahaz, there was revealed to Isaiah the exact measure of the brief period that should elapse before the commencement of the captivity of Israel; "*within sixty and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people*" (Isa. vii. 8).

This first of the Captivity series of chronologic prophecies foretold the overthrow of the ten tribes only.

It dates from a well-marked epoch; a certain confederacy of the King of Syria, with Pekah, King of Israel, and their joint invasion of Judah in B.C. 741.

This attack of the hostile allies struck terror into the heart of Ahaz, King of Judah, and into the hearts of his people; "their hearts were moved as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind" (Isa. vii. 2); and it was then that Isaiah the prophet was sent, to announce to the trembling King of Judah, as a message from Jehovah, the approaching downfall of one of his enemies.

The prediction received its fulfilment in two stages. Shalmanezar, King of Assyria, came up against Samaria in the reign of Hoshea (B.C. 723), and after a siege of

three years, took the city, carried Israel away into Assyria, placed them in Halah and Habor and other cities, and located colonies of Assyrians in the cities of Samaria in their room. Subsequently, in B.C. 676, Esarhaddon the son of Sennacherib completed the work thus begun.

The period of sixty-five years stands chronologically thus:—B.C. 741. Sixty-five years to Ephraim's Fall. B.C. 676.

This completion of the judgment on the ten tribes was quickly followed by the Babylonish captivity, and the total subjection of the entire Jewish nation to Gentile rule.

THE SEVENTY YEARS' CAPTIVITY OF JUDAH

Unlike the judgment denounced against the ten tribes, to which no promise of speedy restoration was attached, a return to their own land was distinctly promised to Judah, at the expiration of seventy years: Jer. xxv. 8–12.

This period of seventy years extends from the first destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings xxiv. 10 and Jer. xxv. 1) to the Edict of Cyrus for the return of the Jews and the rebuilding of the Temple (Ezra i. 2); that is to say, from B.C. 605 to the end of B.C. 536.

THE SEVENTY WEEKS OF DANIEL IX.

When the seventy years of the Babylonish captivity were nearly over, Daniel, "understanding by books" (the books of the prophet Jeremiah) that they must be well-nigh ended, gave himself to earnest supplication for his people, and for the city and sanctuary which were dear to his heart.

While he was speaking in prayer, the answer was

given. Gabriel was sent forth, commissioned to give him further understanding of the counsels of God about the city and Temple of Jerusalem, and the future fortunes of the Jewish nation (Dan. ix. 24-27).

From the then approaching command to restore Jerusalem, to the coming of Messiah the Prince,—that grand goal of all Jewish expectations,—was to be “*seventy weeks.*” The event proved they were to be weeks of years, not of days.

The reason why the chronology of this prediction is expressed in symbolic language, though the rest is literal, is obvious. It was needful so to word the prophecy, as to leave the Jews free to receive or reject Messiah when He should come, for He was not to be imposed on them against their will. It was essential that the form of the prediction should not *compel* a recognition of Jesus of Nazareth: hence the adoption of language which time alone could interpret. A term of ambiguous meaning, suggesting common weeks, was employed; yet the larger reckoning was not by it excluded. On the contrary, it was the basis of the expectation of Messiah’s Advent, so prevalent in Jerusalem when He did appear.

THE “TIME, TIMES, AND A HALF,” OR 1260 YEARS

This is the next link in the chain of chronological prophecy. The period is mentioned, under different names, seven times in Scripture,—in two chapters of Daniel, and three of Revelation.

It is the duration assigned to—

1. The domination of the little horn: Dan. vii. 25.
2. The closing period of Jewish dispersion: Dan. xii. 7.
3. The treading under foot of the Holy City: Rev. xi. 2.

4. The prophesying of the two Witnesses: Rev. xi. 3.
5. The sojourn of the Woman in the Wilderness: Rev. xii. 6.
6. The same, her flight from the serpent: Rev. xii. 14.
7. The duration of the "Beast," or eighth head of the Roman Empire: Rev. xiii. 5.

It is of course evident that 1260 *days* are the same period as *forty and two months*, and that *forty and two months* are the same period as *three years and a half*; and that therefore, on the year-day principle, this seven times mentioned interval is one of 1260 literal years; half of the great week of "seven times," or 2520 years, which measures the Gentile dispensation.

The downfall of the temporal power of the Papacy is the event marking the close of the period of 1260 years, as the rise of the Papacy marked its beginning; and it is evident that neither of these events happened in a year, or indeed a century.

A measurement is found by dating the period from the *Edict of Justinian*, which constituted the Bishop of Rome "*the head of all the Churches*," A.D. 533. This date of the terminus *a quo* gives as the terminus *ad quem* A.D. 1793, the time of the French Revolution, in the course of which the Pope was carried captive from Rome, and the Papal power received a tremendous shock, from which it never fully rallied.

But the *main* reckoning of the period is unquestionably between the chronologic limits, A.D. 606 and 1866-70, the former being the date at which the title of Pope, or universal bishop, was, by the Emperor Phocas, conferred upon Boniface III. and the latter, that of the overthrow of Austria and France, and *the consequent loss of the last vestige of temporal power by Pius IX.* when

Victor Emmanuel moved his Court to the Quirinal, and became sole king of united Italy. Then, and never quite till then, the Papacy, as a temporal power—a horn—ceased to exist. As a religion, it is destined to continue till the second Advent of Christ, when the Lord will destroy it “with the brightness of His Coming.”

THE 2300 YEARS OF DANIEL VIII.

In the year B.C. 553, the third year of the reign of Belshazzar, and about fifteen years before his subjugation by Darius the Mede, there was granted to Daniel a third great symbolic vision, that of the Ram and the He-goat, affording a fuller glance at the history of the *second* and *third* of the four great monarchies.

Given as it was at a time when the Babylonian Empire and the Captivity were both drawing to a close, this vision naturally unfolds God's providence with regard to Israel and Palestine, under the Medo-Persian and Grecian empires. The symbols shown to Daniel prefigured their history with graphic accuracy: the successive rise of the two horns of the Ram, foreshowing the sway of the two dynasties which were afterwards merged in the great Medo-Persian Monarchy; the He-goat from the West,—with his rapid course, great strength, wide dominion, and notable horn, abruptly broken, in the plenitude of the goat's power, and replaced by four notable horns,—prefiguring to the life the locality of origin, the character, the course of conquest, and subsequent history, of the Macedonian or Greek empire of Alexander the Great; as well as the fourfold division consequent on his premature death. In twelve brief years that European monarch overran and subdued all the fairest provinces of Asia; but no sooner had he

reached the zenith of power than he died, and his empire, after a period of confusion, was divided among the four kings, Ptolemy, Seleucus, Lysimachus, and Cassander.

From one of these kingdoms, the prophecy foretells that there would arise in the latter time a "*little horn*" which would ultimately wax "exceeding great"; greater apparently than the "notable horn" itself, which is said to wax only "very great."

This "little horn" is evidently a *fellow* to the "little horn" of the previous vision; only it rises, not amid the ten kingdoms of the Roman earth, but from one of the four branches of Alexander's Greek Empire. These four were,—the SYRIAN kingdom of the Seleucidae, the MACEDONIAN kingdom of Cassander, the EGYPTIAN kingdom of Ptolemy, and the kingdom of Lysimachus, which included THRACE, BYTHYNIA, and other parts of Asia. It was from the kingdom of Ptolemy that this little horn arose. The direction of the early conquests of this singular Power are distinctly given; "toward the South, toward the East, and toward the pleasant land." The main features of his conduct, as described in the vision, are his self-exaltation against the Prince of princes, his persecution of the saints, his taking away the daily sacrifice and defiling the sanctuary, and his casting down the truth to the ground.

While beholding the vision, Daniel heard the question asked of the "Wonderful Numberer" who made the revelation (apparently the Lord Himself), "*How long* shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the making desolate, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?" And it is in answer to *this* question, that the period we are considering is named.

"*Unto two thousand and three hundred days, then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.*"

Now, as this question was asked and answered before the close of the Captivity in Babylon, and when therefore the daily sacrifice and the sanctuary were not in existence, it is clear that this *prediction* of a *second destruction* supposes a *prior restoration*.

This predicted period of 2300 years commences, therefore, at some point in *the time of the restored national existence and ritual worship of the Jews, and includes the entire period of their subsequent dispersion, and of the desolation of the sanctuary*. Its earliest possible starting-point is the decree of Artaxerxes to restore and build Jerusalem; and, reckoned thus, its opening portion is the "seventy weeks," and its second portion, the 1810 years which follow, and end in A.D. 1844, the terminus of so many prophetic times.

The question may be asked,—if this prophecy embrace the whole period from the decree of Artaxerxes to the yet future restoration of Israel, why did the greatest event to take place in the course of those ages,—the first Advent and death of Christ,—find no place in the revelation? The answer seems to be, that the all-important Coming and death of Messiah the Prince, and the events immediately subsequent, were to be fully treated in a revelation devoted entirely to themselves. They are similarly passed by in total silence, both in the vision of the Four Beasts and in that of the fourfold Image; though all three prophecies end with the *second* Advent, or its connected events, the restoration of the throne to the seed of David, and the final cleansing of the Sanctuary of Israel.

The place of paramount importance in this prediction is given to the career and actings of an *Eastern* "little horn"; and our knowledge that the Papacy was the

power predicted under the symbol of the Roman or *Western* "little horn" affords a clue to the meaning of this sister-symbol.

The whole range of prophecy presents two, and only two, "little horns"; and the whole range of history presents two, and only two, Powers which exactly answer to the symbols; Powers which, small and insignificant at first, gradually acquire empire on the ground of religion, and wax exceeding great by so doing; proudly oppose Christ, and fiercely persecute His people; repress and exterminate His truth; enjoy dominion for many long centuries (during which they tread down Jerusalem, either spiritual or literal), and perish at last under the judgment of God.

The Papacy does not stand out more distinctly as *the* great Apostasy of the West, than does Mohammedanism as *the* great parallel Apostasy of the East. The one originated from *within* the Church, the other from *without*; but *they rose together* in the beginning of the seventh century; they have run chronologically similar courses; they have both based their empire on religious pretensions; the one defiled and trampled down the Church, and the other defiled and trod down Jerusalem. In their life, they have been companion evils, and in their death they are not divided; for the one has just expired, politically, and the power of the other is fast expiring.

The Mohammedan power is, we think, unquestionably the main fulfilment of this symbol; but it is almost equally clear that it had a precursive fulfilment, on a smaller scale, in the person and history of *Antiochus Epiphanes*. His career accords so closely with almost every feature of the prediction, as to leave little room for doubt that it was intended by the Holy Spirit as

one subject of the prophecy. For seventeen centuries all expositors, Jewish and Christian, held that the prophecy referred to Antiochus. The Books of Maccabees record his career with great detail, and trace in it, as does Josephus, the fulfilment of the predictions of this *little horn*. But Antiochus never waxed "exceeding great," he never "threw down the place of the sanctuary," though he took away the daily sacrifice; and he lived too near the time when the prophecy was given, to be the full and proper fulfilment of it, seeing it is said of the vision, "it shall be for many days," "at the last end of the indignation." Besides this, the time of the desolation effected by Antiochus,—just three years,—does not in any way, or on any system, correspond with 2300 days; so that we are driven to regard this as one of those prophecies, which has undoubtedly had a double fulfilment, like Hosea xi. 1; or Psalm lxxii. Antiochus was a precursive *little horn*; Mohammedanism is the full and proper reality intended by the symbol.

A certain freedom in the construction of terms must be allowed in the case of all such double predictions, because the Holy Spirit, having more than one event in view, and selecting for description mainly those features which are common to both, may also introduce *some* that are peculiar to the one or to the other.

Antiochus Epiphanes, the Romans, and the Mohammedans, have all taken part in accomplishing these predicted desolations of Jerusalem. The first two took away the daily sacrifice, the second cast down the Sanctuary; all three have defiled the place of the Sanctuary, and trodden it under foot; and by the last two especially have the "mighty and holy people" been "cast down," and "stamped upon," and "destroyed."

But as the Roman power cannot be represented as "a little horn" arising out of one of the four kingdoms into which Alexander's empire was divided (Dan. viii. 9), whereas both Antiochus and Mohammed can, we conclude that they mainly are referred to in the prediction, and *especially the latter*.

It must be borne in mind that no sooner did the Roman Empire cease to tread down Jerusalem, than the Moslem power began to do so, and has continued to do so to this day. The utmost efforts of Christendom, expended in eight different crusades, failed to drive the Moslem out of the Holy Land; for twelve centuries he has defiled the Sanctuary, and stood up against the Prince of princes, casting down the truth to the ground, practising and prospering; but it is written that when this period of 2300 years comes to an end, "he shall be broken without hand," and "then shall the Sanctuary be cleansed."

First, then, with reference to the earlier of the two terminations of the 2300 years before named:—

B.C. 457—2300 years to cleansing of Sanctuary—A.D. 1844.

All great movements have almost imperceptible commencements, just as great rivers spring from little brooks. Israel's restoration and the destruction of Mohammedan rule, that is, "the cleansing of the Sanctuary," are not events to be accomplished in a day or in a year, any more than the overthrow of the city and Temple and national existence of the Jewish people was accomplished in a day or in a year. From Ephraim's *earliest* down to Judah's *latest* captivity, a hundred and sixty-eight years elapsed; and similarly at the restoration, from the first edict of Cyrus to the second of Artaxerxes, ninety-two years elapsed.

We need not marvel then to find that this *greater*

restoration, from *this more than thirty times longer dispersion*, should apparently be destined to occupy a period of seventy-five years.

In the year 1844 the Turkish Sultan was obliged by the European Powers to *relinquish the practice of executions for apostasy, and to make a decree granting religious toleration*. From that date to the present time a process of elevation and incipient restoration of Israel has been going on. It has been so quiet, so gradual, so unobtrusive, that few have noticed it; the turn of the tide has taken place, but the current has not yet set sufficiently strongly in the other direction to attract attention; yet the careful observer cannot fail to note the evident and rapid fall of Turkey and the incipient revival of Palestine. Jerusalem has not yet ceased to be trodden under foot:¹ but what of the two great Powers which for eighteen hundred years (with a few brief intervals) have in turn trodden her down—Rome, and the various forms of the Mohammedan power, whose present head is Turkey?

Rome trod down Jerusalem in the days of Titus, and Turkey holds her down now. "Rome cast her to the ground, and when she was down Turkey set its foot on her neck. Rome hurled her to the dust, and Turkey now tramples her in the mire; Rome destroyed God's

¹ So wrote the author in 1878: and the statement remained true for thirty-nine years. But with the year 1917, the year indicated by Dr. Guinness, in *Light for the Last Days* (1887), as "one of the most important, perhaps the most momentous" of the "terminal years of crisis," because it would mark the close of two long and definite prophetic periods, the one Eastern, the other Western,—came the liberation of Jerusalem from Mohammedan tyranny. To-day, the city is not indeed in Jewish hands; but it is no longer "trodden down" by infidels, and another stage has been reached in the uplifting of Israel and Israel's land, of which the author here speaks.—ED.

Temple, and actually ploughed up the sacred ground on which it stood. Turkey maintains on the sacred site the Mosque of Omar; and on that holy hill where Abraham offered Isaac, where David offered the oxen of Araunah, where Solomon built his Temple, and where the Lord Jesus, the Son of David, cast out all that was unholy; there, by Turkish authority, now stands a Mohammedan mosque; and there no Jew is permitted to set his foot.”¹

But Pagan Rome passed away long since, and Papal Rome is no longer a political power in the earth; the first oppressor is gone, and Turkey, the second, is fast going. Every step in the downfall of Turkey is a step in the direction of the cleansing of the Sanctuary, and these steps are in our day succeeding each other rapidly. Since 1821, Turkey has lost Greece and Servia, Moldavia, and Wallachia, Morocco, Algeria, and Egypt, Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Bulgaria. There is every sign, when the present is contrasted with the past, that the time for the complete liberation of Palestine from Moslem tyranny is at hand.

The second starting-point from which these 2300 years may be dated is the era of the Seleucidae, B.C. 312. The Seleucidae were the race of monarchs (descended from Seleucus Nicator, one of the four notable horns of the He-goat) from which *Antiochus Epiphanes* sprung.

As this era of the Seleucidae, long used by the Jews themselves, and still employed by the Nestorians and other Eastern nations, is dated from the great founder of the dynasty of the precursory “little horn,” it is not an unsuitable point of departure. The period of 2300 years measured from it, and reckoned in lunar years, runs out in A.D. 1919–20, seventy-five years later than

¹ Canon Hoare, *Rome, Turkey, and Jerusalem*, p. 93.

its first termination in 1844, and the same year as the *main* measurement of the Times of the Gentiles, dated from Nebuchadnezzar's overthrow of Jehoiakim, B.C. 602.

2500 YEARS, OR SEVEN TIMES

As we have already considered the distinctive moral characteristics and the chronological features of this period, we need in this place dwell only on its astronomic measures. It is the great dispensational week, the arc of time which spans alike each of the three moral divisions of human history; it is the period of the four-fold image of Gentile rule, which is to introduce the everlasting kingdom of the Son of God. It is the most important of all the prophetic periods, and the oft-repeated 1260 years of the Apostasy is its second half.

The difference between 2520 true lunar and the same number of true solar years is seventy-five years. In other words, the seventy-five years added in the prophecy are exactly equal to the epact of the whole "seven times." If 2520 lunar and the same number of solar years begin together, the former will run out seventy-five years before the latter. The seventy-five years added to the "Times of the Gentiles" are equal to the epact of that great dispensational period.

Was it by chance that Daniel lighted upon these two periods, so widely dissimilar, and which yet bear to each other this remarkable astronomic relation? Impossible! as impossible as that he could either have known that 2300 years was a soli-lunar cycle, or that he could have selected by *chance* the exact number of years in that cycle, as the period of the restored Temple and the subsequent desolation of the Sanctuary. Such coincidences are not the work of chance. They must be

“SEVEN TIMES” WITH THE ADDED SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS

RECKONED FROM NABONASSAR AND FROM NEBUCHADNEZZAR

ERA OF } 26th Feb.
NABONASSAR. } 747 B.C.
Captivity of Israel.

598	Λ	Λ	I.	30 45	75	{ NEBUCHADNEZZAR (Captivity of Judah).
			BABYLON.	30 45	75	
				Λ	Λ	
	1260 Lunar Years		II. PERSIA.			
			III. GREECE.			
			IV. ROME.			
	2520 Solar Years		Bisection Era.	2520 Lunar Years	2520 Solar Years	GREGORY THE GREAT. VITALIAN.
			PAPAL AND MOSLEM POWERS.			
FRENCH REVOLUTION, 1774.	V					
1849.	75	30 45		V		
(?) 1924.	75	30 45			V	

[NOTE.—The Author put only a query in place of 1924.]

accepted with reverential awe, as evidences that the Divine mind which planned the universe inspired also the sacred Book.

In these added seventy-five years, having this peculiar astronomic character, we see also one of those evidently intentional elements of uncertainty which meet us so frequently in chronologic prophecy. Just as it would be impossible, prior to fulfilment, to say which of several probable eras was the real commencing era of the seventy years' captivity, and hence of the "Times of the Gentiles," so it is impossible in this case to decide whether these *added* seventy-five years are to have an inclusive fulfilment in 2520 solar years, or an added fulfilment, or both.

Regarding the 2520 years as lunar, and dating them from 598 B.C., which is the *latest* commencement of the "Times of the Gentiles," they terminated in A.D. 1848; and we are now living in the interval created by the inequality of solar and lunar movements during the lapse of the whole "seven times." But if the 2520 years be regarded as *solar* years, and dated from the same commencing era, they do not terminate until A.D. 1923, and the concluding seventy-five years may possibly be added to that date. But the prophecy implies an *end* at the *beginning* of this supplementary seventy-five years; a fuller and more blessed end at the close of their first section—30 years (a month) of years; and the fullest and most blessed terminal point at the close of the supplementary forty-five years; that is, at the close of the whole seventy-five. What mysteries are here indicated, who shall say? The full establishment of Messiah's kingdom on earth may, even after His glorious Epiphany, be a work of time. The downfall of the "little horn" seems to be the event presented in the prophecy as marking the first close. No *events* at all are

assigned to the other two chronological points. They are simply indicated, and a character of final blessedness is stamped on the last. It is vain to speculate where Scripture affords no clue. "The secret things belong unto God; but the things that are revealed, to us and to our children."

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUDING REMARKS

WE have in the foregoing pages endeavoured to elucidate the principles of progressive revelation and progressive interpretation, and we have under their guidance traced the historic fulfilment of two of the main symbolic prophecies of Scripture. We have directed attention to facts of astronomy, and shown their connection with the facts of Biblical chronology. We have traced a system of times and seasons, historic and prophetic, running through Scripture. We have shown that this system is characterized by soli-lunar dominion, and by a marked and peculiar septiformity.

It remains in conclusion to show the bearing of this Divine system of times and seasons:—

I. On some of the main controverted points of prophetic interpretation.

II. On the evidence of the inspiration of Scripture.

III. On the profoundly interesting question of the point now reached in human history, and the nearness of “the end of the age.”

I. The Divine system of times and seasons which we have traced discredits the Futurist system of interpreting the symbolic prophecies of Daniel and St. John, and confirms the Protestant historic system. We have shown that if the true meaning of the *times* connected with these prophecies can be determined, it will of itself settle

the question at issue between these two schools of interpreters; inasmuch as the nature of the predicted Antichrist is decided by the duration of his existence. If the "1260 days" of his dominion be (unlike all the other features of the prediction) *literal*, then the Futurists are right in looking for a future division of the Roman earth into ten kingdoms, with a coincident future rise of an individual Antichrist, whose advent shall precede by three and a half years that of Christ; and in denying that these prophecies have already received their fulfilment. But if the "1260 days" be (like the predictions in which the period occurs) *symbolic*, then the Little Horn and the Ten Horns, *having a duration of 1260 years attached to them*, and their rise immediately succeeding the break-up of the Roman Empire, the fulfilment must be looked for *in the past*; and can only be found in the history of the Papacy, and its relations to the kingdoms of Christendom and to the true Church of Christ, during the last twelve centuries. In consequence of this, its great importance, we dwelt at some length on the evidence in favour of the year-day system of interpretation, and we must now direct special attention to the *confirmation of its truth* afforded by the Divine plan of times and seasons.

The period which marks the duration, and therefore the nature of the great Antichristian Apostasy, is seven times designated by expressions synonymous with *half a week of years*: "forty and two months," "1260 days," "time, times, and a half." This alone would prove nothing, because weeks on a great variety of scale are found in the Word and works of God. But *this half-week leads up to a certain terminal point*, the establishment of the kingdom of the God of heaven, the overthrow of Antichrist and his armies, the cessation of the

treading-down of the Holy City. These same events mark the termination of one of the weeks we have considered, the last of the three great dispensational weeks, the Times of the Gentiles. That is, we find a *whole* week of "seven times," or 2520 years, leading up to that group of events; and we find also a half-week of "time, times, and a half" leading up to the same. How can we question that the latter is half of the former? that the half-week of years is symbolic of a half-week of prophetic times, or years of years? that the predicted 1260 "*days*" represent the 1260 *years* which are the last half of the Gentile dispensation?

If this be so,—if this period be the solemnly momentous last half of the last great dispensation,—the twelve centuries which have rolled over Christendom since the rise of the Papacy,—then it is easy to understand the prominence assigned to it in the prophetic Word. But if it be literally half a week of years, it is a half *without a corresponding half*, and no reason can be assigned for the great importance which is attached to it in Scripture.

When, further, turning to the scroll of history, we see that *the great week of the Times of the Gentiles was bisected by the rise of an Antichristian Power*, accurately fulfilling the conditions of the prophecy, whose political existence did endure 1260 years, or half a week on the year-day scale, it seems almost impossible to resist the conviction that *this is the scale employed, and this the Power foretold*.

But the fact that *these periods of Daniel, interpreted on the year-day scale, are found to be astronomic cycles of singular accuracy*, unknown to mankind until discovered by means of these very prophecies, seems alone to settle the question that this is the true scale. Taken literally, the periods of symbolic prophecy are astronomi-

cally *nothing*. Interpreted on the year-day principle, they are natural cycles, marked out as such as distinctly as our ordinary months and years. Would this be so, were the brief symbolic period everything, and the anti-typical year-day period nothing? Taken literally, 2300 days are astronomically nothing; while 2300 *years* form the largest soli-lunar cycle known.

When these harmonies are allowed their due weight in determining the true scale of prophetic chronology, only one conclusion seems possible. The system employed is that of denoting a year by a day; not brief, but long periods are therefore predicted, enduring through centuries and affecting many generations of men. And these events are not to be looked for in the future; they are already for the most part fulfilled. This conclusion overthrows the Futurist system, and fixes the application of the main symbolic prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse to the past and present, rather than exclusively to the future.

We invite Futurist expositors to consider the arguments which we have adduced, and either to refute them or to acknowledge their force. Prophetic discussion and controversy are often feared and deprecated, because they have in other days occasioned separation among brethren. This, however, is an evil from which humility, and a real desire to discover the truth of God, will effectually preserve sincere inquirers.

One system or the other must be erroneous; surely it is not hopeless to discover which! No generation of Christians could ever have attempted the task with such a prospect of success as our own. Not only is there a special promise to "the wise" in the time of the end, that they shall understand these things, but the very nature of the case makes it clear, that if the historic

system be the true one, *we* are in a better position to prove it than our predecessors could be, for every fresh fulfilment that can be indicated strengthens the proof. That most notable event, the downfall of the Temporal Power of the Papacy exactly 1260 years after the edict of Phocas, ought to provoke a calm and thorough re-examination of the subject on the part of Futurist interpreters.

"The days are at hand," and the testimony of the Church on this great subject should be *as clear and as unanimous as possible*, for if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare for the battle? The world will never give heed to the warnings of the prophetic Word, while the ministers of that Word differ diametrically among themselves as to its true meaning; nor will Christians be roused to any such deep and real conviction of the nearness of the end as will produce practical results, by the exposition of varying and inconsistent views. At this eleventh hour, if ever, the predictions of the Word of God ought to be clear to wise and humble students; nor should such rest content without an honest endeavour to compare and resolve their differences. We humbly hope that our own discoveries, as to the exact measures of the prophetic times, may be helpful in the consideration of the question; and that the year-day system of interpreting the times of symbolic prophecy,—that main pillar of the Protestant historic view,—may, in the light of the confirmatory evidence of its truth afforded by this investigation of the Divine system of times and seasons, be generally received among students of prophecy as a truth which has been demonstrated.

II. The facts we have adduced have also an important bearing on the fundamental question of the inspiration

of Scripture, and thus indirectly on the subject of Christian evidences.

What but the inspiration of God can account for the fact that the prophetic periods of Daniel and St. John are found to be accurate soli-lunar cycles? Was Daniel acquainted with this fact? Could John have adapted his writings to the discoveries of modern science?

Man can never have been the author of a system of times and seasons which involves the co-ordination of things celestial and terrestrial; of the periods of prophecy and history with the revolutions of sun and moon and planet. Man can neither foretell the future nor control it; man cannot order the course of ages, or so direct the revolutions of the moral world as that they shall harmonize with those of the material universe. Such acts can be attributed to God alone. The sacred volume, which unfolds the Divine world-system of ages future at the time when it was written, as well as of ages past; foretelling periods since fulfilled, and found, 2000 years after their prediction, to be celestial cycles,—must be from God: and he who refuses to acknowledge this is bound to find some other satisfactory explanation of facts which true science cannot deny, nor common honesty ignore.

III. And finally, the Divine system—of times and seasons which we have been investigating has an evident bearing on the profoundly interesting subject of the *nearness* of the end of the age,—of the close of these Times of the Gentiles, and the simultaneous inauguration of the “Times of restitution of all things, of which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.”

It bears on this question mainly by the evidence it affords of the existence of a definite and predetermined

chronological system, in the providential dealings of God with man; in the proof it gives that this system is a system of *weeks*, and that the great week of this third or Gentile dispensation has almost run its course. Further, by confirming the year-day system of interpreting the chronology of symbolic prophecy, it brings the half-week of the great Antichristian Apostasy into harmony with the other weeks of Scripture and of nature, determining its *character* thus by its *duration*, and leaving no doubt as to the power intended. The fulfilments which this system enables us to trace in the past are so many guides as to the future, so that by its help chronologic prophecy, instead of being a puzzling mystery, is felt to become a light shining in a dark place,—a light which throws its beams back over the complex mazes of history, and forward over the interesting events of the rapidly approaching crisis which is to usher in the sabbath of humanity.

We must therefore briefly review *the evidence of the nearness of the end of the age* which is afforded by prophecy; and we must show that while there is irresistible evidence to prove that the end is *near*, there are no data to enable us to fix on any exact year as the predestined time of the consummation. According to the testimony of the sure word of prophecy, the end is *near*, but none can say *how near*, or determine its actual epoch.

First, then, in proof that it is *near*, let the measures of the three dispensations be remembered. "Seven times" and seven times *only* are appointed as the period of Jewish degradation and dispersion. He who predicted the 400 years' affliction of the seed of Abraham, at the beginning of their history, and who when those 400 years were fulfilled, delivered Israel from Egypt, and

judged the nation which had held them in bondage, predicted later on that for a great week of 2520 years Gentiles should rule over and afflict the Jewish people, and that at the end of that time Gentile monarchy should be destroyed, and the kingdom restored to Israel in the person of their Messiah. Independent Jewish monarchy fell, in the Babylonish Captivity, and since that event the tribes of Israel have existed only in bondage or dispersion. In about the year 1924, the great week of the Times of the Gentiles will have run out,—measured from its latest possible commencing date, the final conquest of Jehoiachin by Nebuchadnezzar in B.C. 598. The Great Image of Gentile monarchy has but a few years longer to exist; the period of Gentile supremacy is all but ended; the great but hidden dispensational prophecy of the “seven times” clearly teaches that we are *near* the end of the age.

And secondly, let the measure of the Antichristian Apostasy, which is predicted under seven different aspects, be remembered. Half a week is assigned as its duration, half the great dispensational week of seven times; that is, 1260 years. Like all the other periods we have considered, this half-week may be dated from a variety of starting-points;¹ either from the decree of the Emperor Justinian constituting the Bishop of Rome head of all the Churches, and so delivering the saints into his hands (A.D. 533),—when it ends in the French Revolution (A.D. 1793); or from the decree of the Emperor Phocas, conceding to Boniface III. the primacy

¹ This is the case even with the comparatively brief period of the Babylonish Captivity, whose 70 years may be dated either from Nebuchadnezzar's first invasion, B.C. 606, to the edict of Cyrus, B.C. 536, or from the destruction of the Temple, B.C. 587, to its restoration, B.C. 517.

of the churches, Eastern as well as Western (A.D. 606), which makes it run out at the destruction of the Papal Temporal Power (A.D. 1866-70); or the period may be dated from the year A.D. 663, when Vitalian, the Bishop of Rome, enjoined the services of the Church to be read in Latin throughout all Christendom,—when the half-week would (like the whole week) expire in A.D. 1923.

We have seen the first measures of this period expire, and we have seen the events predicted take place. The prophecy *implies* a brief succeeding period before the close, "they shall take away his kingdom, to consume and to destroy it to the end: and the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him." We have seen the kingdom taken away; we wait to see the full consumption and destruction, and the establishment of the kingdom of the Most High. The prophecy of the "time, times, and a half," *proves by its fulfilment* that we are close upon the end of the age.

And thirdly, the prediction relative to the cleansing of the Sanctuary does the same. The Holy Land, the Holy City, and the site of the Temple of God at Jerusalem, are to be finally "cleansed" 2300 years from some starting-point which is not exactly defined, but which appears from the prophecy to be closely connected with the restoration of Judah from Babylon; Jerusalem is after that period to cease to be trodden down by the Gentiles, the Times of the Gentiles having been fulfilled. Dated from the earliest possible starting-point, the commission given by Artaxerxes to Ezra in B.C. 457, this period expired in 1844, which was a marked epoch in the fall of that Mohammedan Power which has long

defiled the Sanctuary and trodden down Jerusalem. But dated 145 years later, from the era of the Seleucidae, this period, measured in lunar years, expires *seventy-five years later*, in A.D. 1919. We have noted various indications in the condition of Palestine and of Israel, and in the political events of our own day, which seem to indicate that the cleansing of the Sanctuary and the restoration of Israel are not distant. When these shall take place, when the Moslems, now driven out of Bulgaria, shall be driven also out of Syria, when the nations of Europe, actuated, it may be, merely by mutual mistrust and political jealousy, or it may be by higher motives, shall conspire to reinstate the Jews in the land of their forefathers,—*then* the last warning bell will have rung; then the last of the unfulfilled predictions of Scripture, as to events prior to the great crisis, will have received its accomplishment, then the second Advent of Israel's rejected Messiah to reign in conjunction with His risen and glorified saints as King over all the earth will be close at hand, then the mystery of God will be all but finished, and the manifestation of Christ immediate.¹ How long a time may be required to bring about this restoration of Israel—who shall say? *The destruction of the power and independence of the Ottoman Empire, like the annihilation of the temporal dominion of the Papacy, should be as a trumpet-blast to Christendom, proclaiming that the day of Christ is at hand.*

The sanctuary cycle of 2300 years, equally with the two previous prophecies, indicates that the end is *near*.

Though differing as to many minor details, students

¹ We say emphatically "manifestation," because Scripture does not seem absolutely to exclude the possibility that the rapture of the Church (1 Thess. iv.) may have taken place before.

of chronological prophecy with one consent *agree in this conclusion*, which is in itself a strong argument that it rests on a solid basis of revealed truth. The fact, that many premature anticipations of the end have by the event been proved mistaken, is sometimes adduced as a proof that all expectations based on chronologic prophecy are of the nature of vain and foolish speculations, deserving only of ridicule and contempt from sober-minded Christian people. But when viewed in the light of the revealed purpose of God to make known the future *only by degrees*, and only as the Church was able to bear it, the fact alluded to is merely a proof that the symbolic language in which these chronological predictions were expressed has answered its divinely-intended purpose, and disguised till nearly the time of its accomplishment the true meaning of the prophecy. To the early generations of the Church it was not given to understand these chronologic prophecies *at all*; later generations made a good guess at their general drift and scale; the Reformers obtained approximately true ideas of their scope and application; to many of the prophetic expositors and commentators of recent centuries very clear light has been granted, and (in spite of the obscurity which rash Futurist speculations have cast over the subject) it may safely be said that in our own day the light has become so strong, clear, and bright, that the historic and doctrinal portions of Scripture are scarcely more simple and comprehensible than are its main prophetic outlines, to those who carefully study them.

And further, though foolish speculators have brought ridicule on the subject of prophecy, by presumptuous attempts to fix the day and hour of the second Advent, and though even cautious and learned students have

often erred in their anticipations, yet it must in all fairness be granted, on the other hand, that no sooner was the historic system of interpreting the Apocalypse received, and the true scale of enlarging the miniature periods of symbolic prophecy adopted, than some remarkably correct anticipations of future events were made and published. Since then, expositors of chronologic prophecy have proved, over and over again, that they are on the right track, even though they may have erred in the application of certain principles, or in the selection of certain data on which to base their calculations. It is evident that even when they had rightly accepted the year-day system, and when they had correctly apprehended the meaning of the symbols employed, they were by no means secure from minor errors. The very fact that all the prophetic periods have several eras of commencement and conclusion,—coincident with definite stages of development and decay in the Powers symbolized,—leaves room for such errors, and accounts for them, without detracting from the value of the system employed.

If such false anticipations are noted, correct ones should in all fairness be remembered also. One of the earliest and most remarkable of these is that of Robert Fleming, who in his work on the *Rise and Fall of Rome Papal*, published in the year 1701, anticipated the years 1794 and 1848 as critical years in the downfall of the Papacy; he added, "yet we are not to imagine that these events will totally destroy the Papacy, although they will exceedingly weaken it, for we find that it is still in being and alive when the next Vial is poured out." Is it not a proof that this expositor was working on right lines, and had seized the true clue, that he should thus, *nearly a century beforehand*, have

fixed on the close of the 18th century as the commencement of the era of Divine vengeance on the Papal Power; and have pointed out, within a single year, the very central period of that signal judgment. The year 1793 was that of the Reign of Terror, and of the temporary suspension of the public profession of Christianity in France, the first of Papal kingdoms; and five years later the Papal government in Italy was overthrown, and the Pope carried captive to Sienna. There was not a sign in the political heavens, when Fleming wrote, that such events were impending; he foresaw them solely in the light of prophecy.

A very considerable number of expositors agreed in indicating, long before their arrival, the remarkable years 1848 and 1866-70, as years of crisis in the downfall of despotic power in Europe, and of Papal usurpation; while the last half of the 19th century, as the appointed period in which should be finished the long-continued exhaustion and decay of the Ottoman Empire, symbolized by the drying-up of the Euphrates, has been indicated by an equally large number.

Let those who have justified themselves in turning from any deep or thorough study of the prophetic Word, on the plea that interpreters differ among themselves, and that their prognostications have often proved false, remember that this must have been the case with regard to each one of the chronological prophecies that have now passed into history. Though each one, as *we* can see, has been fulfilled with marvellous exactitude, error would have been not only possible, but almost inevitable, in any attempt to fix beforehand the *exact* date of the predicted event. Had Israel in Egypt, or Moses in Midian, endeavoured to discover beforehand the *precise year* in which the 400 years of affliction and bondage,

predicted by God to Abram as to befall his seed, would terminate, they would have been sorely puzzled to select a commencing epoch.

A longer bondage is now drawing to a close, and a greater Exodus awaits both the natural and the spiritual seeds of Abraham; its date is similarly fixed in the purpose of God, and similarly defined by chronologic prophecy; and though some students may mistake its exact era, and be discouraged by an apparent failure of their hope, and though the world may exult, and the mockers say, Where is the promise of His Coming?—yet *the vision is for an appointed time, at the end it shall speak and not lie*, or be found false; therefore we will wait for it, “for it will surely come, it will not tarry” (Hab. ii. 3).

It was the same with the prophecy of the seventy years’ captivity in Babylon, and with that of the four hundred and ninety years from the restoration to Messiah the Prince; both were clear in their main tenor, but both obscure as regards their exact termini. As to the “seventy weeks,” even when its true year-day scale was understood, it was impossible to fix its commencing date with any certainty, because there were several edicts of restoration issued by the Persian kings, any one of which might well have been *supposed* to mark the starting-point of the 490 years; and there was no deciding whether the terminal event was to be the birth, or the maturity and presentation to Israel, or the death, of Messiah. Even now, in the light of the historic fulfilment, it is not altogether easy to affix the *exact* limits of these 490 years, though it is plain that such was the interval, because several important termini seem to possess claims to be the intended ones. *In short it is clear, that a knowledge of the exact year of its termination is not needful to an intelligent and correct apprehension of the*

fact, that a great chronologic prophecy is near its close. Daniel understood by the writings of Jeremiah that the seventy years' captivity had nearly expired, and set himself to pray for the promised restoration. Those who looked for redemption in Israel were right in conceiving that the time for Messiah's appearance had come, though neither they, nor Daniel, could in all probability have assigned the correct chronological termini of the predictions on which their hopes were based.

This is exactly the position of the students of the prophetic Word in our day; they *know* that they are living in the time of the end, but guided by the experience of these earlier saints they see also, that the two great partially *fulfilled* chronological prophecies,—that of the seven times, or 2520 years of Gentile dominion,—and that of the 2300 years to the cleansing of the Sanctuary,—have several possible dates of rise and close. (The 1260 years of the duration of the Papal dynasty as a political power, must, since the events of 1870, be placed in the category of *fulfilled*, rather than unfulfilled predictions.) On this account alone, as well as other grounds, the wise among them refrain from any attempt to assign the precise date of the consummation. These "times" appear to run out first in A.D. 1844–48 and fully in A.D. 1919–23, but whether these are the final dates, and what the *exact* nature of the terminal event may be, it is impossible to ascertain and foolish to surmise. We are in the position of travellers, approaching a large and to them unknown city at the end of a long railway journey. They are aware of the distance to be traversed, of the stations to be passed on the way, and of the time required for the transit. The milestones have long shown them that they are rapidly nearing their goal; the time the journey was to occupy has

elapsed, and they have observed that the station just passed was the last but one. Yet the terminus in the strange city may have several distinct platforms, separated from each other by short distances; the train may draw up at one or two before it comes to a final stand at the last: they are ignorant of the exact localities in the great metropolis, and hardly know at which station they will be met by their expectant friends. Still they have no hesitation in making their preparations for leaving the carriage, and in congratulating each other with a glad, "here we are at last"! They would smile at the man who should dispute their conviction, though they may be unable to decide whether it will be five minutes or ten, or only two or three, before they actually reach their destination. It is a mere question of minutes and miles; if one platform is not the right one, the next may be; at any rate, the long journey lies behind, the desired goal is all but reached. It is easy to be patient, and not difficult to bear a momentary disappointment, because the main result is certain, and the end in any case close at hand.

Let it also be noted that the conviction of the nearness of the end, derived from a study of the Divine system of times and seasons, is confirmed by a multitude of predictions, wholly destitute of the chronologic element; as is proved by the fact, that the Futurist school of interpreters, who are deprived by their system of all the guidance afforded by chronologic prophecy, are convinced equally with their opponents, that these are the last days.

Space obliges us to select only one or two "signs of the times" of this nature. The angel mentions to the prophet Daniel two very peculiar and definite characteristics of the last days. "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." Now if any well in-

formed and intelligent person were asked, What have been the leading and distinctive characteristic marks of our time as distinguished from any previous period in the world's history? he would at once reply, "steam locomotion, and the universality of education and spread of scientific knowledge."

Our Lord Himself gave another sign of the closing days of this age. He said, "This Gospel of the kingdom must first be preached among all nations, and *then* shall the end come."

It may safely be asserted that never since the words were spoken has the Gospel been so widely preached among the nations as it has in our own time. Since the year 1801, when the Church Missionary Society was founded, almost all the Missionary Societies in existence have sprung up, as well as all the Bible Societies: and the Gospel story has been translated into between two and three hundred additional languages, spoken by six or eight hundred millions of mankind. Colporteurs are distributing it, and preachers expounding it in all lands; and though there are still many tribes and peoples who have never yet heard the Gospel message, yet we may say that there is no kingdom, no regularly organized civilized "nation" or community, in which it has not been proclaimed, and in which it has not won some trophies. When it has been preached in *all* nations, then shall the end come.

But perhaps there is no sign of the times more solemnly indicative, to the humble student of Scripture, of the approach of the end, than the confident conviction that seems universally to prevail in the professing Church, and in the world, that all things continue as they were, *and will so continue*. Not only is there no expectation of impending judgment, there is a bold assumption that

no change in the existing order of things is probable, or even possible.

The very idea of a Divine interference in the affairs of this world is scouted as foolish and fanatical; the testimony of history to past interferences of the kind is superciliously explained away, or plainly pronounced to be myth, not real history; and any faith in the testimony of prophecy is regarded as antiquated folly. The reign of eternal law is proclaimed, while a Law-giver is ignored; the theory of progressive development is advocated, and the evidence of supernatural interruptions in the past, neglected. The state of popular opinion in Christendom at this hour on this point is foretold with marvellous exactness by the Apostle Peter, and the true antidote to it prescribed. "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His Coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were since the beginning of the creation."

This peculiar form of scoffing unbelief, foretold as to characterize the last days, and most conspicuously characterizing these days, has never before prevailed widely in Christendom. It is an offspring of advanced scientific knowledge, a result and accompaniment of modern attainments. The ignorance of other ages made men superstitious. Far from denying the existence of an invisible and immaterial world, they were slaves to credulity, and fell easy victims to the false miracles and lying wonders of a cunning and covetous priesthood. Apprehensions of an approaching end of the world were from time to time widely prevalent in the dark ages. Bold infidelity, general scepticism as to all that is supernatural, gross materialism and positive philosophy, the foolhardy presumption that dares to assert "all things continue as

they were since the beginning of the creation" and to argue "and will so continue for ever"—these features are peculiar to modern days, and were never before so marked as they are *now*.

Were it otherwise, were men willing to heed the testimony of the Word of God, we might be perfectly certain, *the end would not be near*. Such is not to be the tone and temper of the last generation. "In such an hour *as ye think not* the Son of Man cometh." Never was there a day when men were so firmly convinced that no supernatural event is to be expected, as they are now. But "when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape."

That the end of this Christian age, that end so bright with the glow of coming glory to the true Church, so lurid with the fires of approaching judgment to apostate Christendom, so big with blessing to Israel, and so full of hope for the nations of the earth,—is close at hand, seems for those who accept the testimony of Scripture to be beyond all reasonable question.

It is true Israel must first be restored to Palestine; it is true the Gospel must probably first be preached more widely even than it now is; it is true that "Babylon" must first fall more completely, as far as we can judge; and it is true that these things take time. But when we consider the progress that has in recent years been made *in all these directions*—the elevation in the condition of the land and people of Israel, the removal of Jewish disabilities, the formation of the Universal Israelite Alliance, the exploration and survey of Palestine, the decay of the Turkish Power; the increase of missions, the opening up of China, Japan, and interior Africa, the revival of evangelical truth and effort in the

Protestant Church, and the consequent increase of missionary effort; the separations of Church and State, and the disendowments of national Churches which have taken place; the spread of infidelity in Christendom, and the increase of open ungodliness; the overthrow of despotisms, and the establishment of democratic forms of government in their place,—we feel that supposing we are still thirty or forty years distant from the end of the age, all that is predicted may easily come to pass in the interval. Events in our day move rapidly, as if they too were impelled by steam, so that *the apparent rate of progress, and the apparent distance coincide well.*

Unless the entire Biblical system of sabbatic chronology have no application at all to the measures of human history as a whole, unless the moral and chronological harmonies which we have traced between the three dispensations be utterly illusive and unreal, unless the divinely instituted typical ritual of Leviticus have no chronologic agreement with the long course of redemption history, unless there be no meaning in soli-lunar chronology, unless the employment of great astronomic cycles to bound the duration of historic and prophetic periods be a matter of pure accident, unless, in short, the whole system which we have traced out in the Word and works of God be utterly groundless and erroneous—there can be no question that we are living in the very last days of this dispensation.

And what is the great event which is to close it? Speaking broadly and generally, it is the return in glory of the Son of God to this earth, to establish therein the kingdom of the Most High. Christ when on earth often alluded to the end of the age, and He did so most definitely in His parting command to His apostles. “Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the

name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the age" (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20).

This commission and this promise, taken together, clearly imply that evangelistic, missionary, and pastoral labours were to continue under the patronage and in the power of an absent and ascended Saviour, *until* the end of the age; *till then* He promises to be with His people; *after that*, according to a previously given promise, He will come again and receive them to Himself, that where He is they may be also. *He with them* till the end of the age by His Spirit, while still absent in person; *they with Him* after the end of the age, "for ever with the Lord." The return of Christ and the rapture of His Church to meet Him in the air is then the great event which closes this age, and marks the transition to another age—even the Millennial; that personal Epiphany which is the event symbolized by the fall of the stone cut out without hands, which destroys the image of the Gentile monarchy, and becomes a mountain and fills the whole earth. We are living in what appears to be the latest close of the Times of the Gentiles, which introduces this Millennial reign of Christ.

That the transition from this age to the next will occupy a *period*, and not be a *point* of time, seems likely from analogy, and seems to be indicated in the two brief supplementary periods added to the main one by the closing words of the angel to Daniel. That there will be marked stages in the accomplishment of the stupendous change from the world that is, to the world that shall be, and that it is impossible to fix their dates, or to determine beforehand the precise order of the various events revealed, as destined to occur in the

course of the great crisis, may be freely admitted, without detracting in the least from the momentous weight and solemn importance of this most blessed conclusion. That the rapture will precede the glorious manifestation of Christ with His saints, and the Marriage of the Lamb antedate the destruction of Antichrist and his host, is clear from New Testament prophecy, but what the interval between the two events may be, whether the twinkling of an eye or a longer space of time, there are no data to enable us to determine.

That a period of awful and destructive judgments on apostate Christendom is to prepare the way for the full establishment of the Millennial throne of Christ, and the world-wide recognition of His peaceful righteous sway, is also abundantly clear (2 Thess. i. ii.; Rev. xix.); but the precise nature, duration, and effect of these judgments, it is impossible to define.

And while the chronological revelations of Scripture seem to prove that we are living within a few years of the latest close of all the prophetic periods, there is nothing whatever to forbid the thought that the end may come before that latest close. The main measures of the periods *may* be from the earlier starting-points. We may be already far advanced in the supplemental seventy-five years. If the glorious Epiphany were to take place at any time, chronologic prophecy would still have been fulfilled, and as the Rapture of the Church precedes that Epiphany, who shall say how near that blessed hope may be? There is no ground for concluding it will *not* take place this year or next, any more than for asserting that it will. An intentional and impenetrable obscurity and uncertainty is even now left around this point, and must be till the event itself shall occur. Each passing year diminishes the number of the

few remaining years of this "time of the end," *somewhere in the course of which* the Advent apparently must take place, and should therefore quicken our hope, and increase our watchfulness: but to the last we shall not know the day or the hour.

This wholesome and divinely appointed ignorance of the exact period is perfectly consistent with an intelligent apprehension of the true chronological character of the days in which we live, and a profound conviction that they are emphatically and literally the last days. An approximate knowledge of the truth on this great subject is all we can gain, and it is *all that we require*; anything further would be injurious. *Such a knowledge was all that was ever granted to the saints of God in connection with the fulfilment of other chronological prophecies in other days; for prophecy is not given to gratify curiosity, or to minister to mere excitement, but to serve high and holy moral ends.*

And our ignorance and uncertainty on the subject are of a very different nature from those which were appointed for the early Christian Church. Just as the patriarchs had the promise and hope of Christ's first Coming, but no clue whatever as to the time of that greatly desired event; while the expectations of the faithful in Israel *subsequent to the restoration from Babylon* were definitely guided, by the chronologic prophecy of the seventy weeks, to the century and decade, though not to the very year of Messiah the Prince, so the earlier generations of Christians had the blessed hope of Christ's second Coming, but no clue whatever as to its period. The widest possible range was purposely left for uncertainty on the subject; they were told that the Master might return in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockerowing, or in the morning,

and they had no idea which period was the most probable. For though they held in their hands chronological prophecies containing mystic intimations of the appointed duration of this dispensation, they knew not the language in which the revelation was written, and to them it remained, as the Lord had ordained that it should remain, a hidden mystery.

We are in a widely different position; not a fresh revelation, but new light on old revelations, has by the course of events, and by the enlightenings of the Spirit of God, been granted to us. The facts of history have explained the predictions of Scripture; experience has demonstrated the true scale of the chronology of symbolic prophecy; our expectations are consequently confined to a much narrower range. The evening light of the early ages of Church history faded away, long ago, into the "midnight" of the dark ages of the great Apostasy; the "cockcrow" of the Reformation has already brightened into the dawn of morning light, and *our* uncertainty is limited to ignorance of the precise moment, at which the Sun of Righteousness will rise in visible glory above our horizon. The scheme of Divine providence has been by degrees unfolded, and the signs of the times assure us, that we are not out in our reckoning. We are far advanced in the last days of the Christian dispensation; and though still ignorant of the day and the hour of our Lord's return, we know that that great event must be close at hand.

If the uncertainty of the early Christians was calculated to have a sobering, sanctifying, and stimulating effect on their minds, what should be the effect of this comparative certainty on ours? If there is immense practical power in the thought, *the Lord may come at any time*; how much more in the conviction *He is sure*

to come before many years are past. This certainty is one which no previous generation of Christians could have had, because the great prophetic period of 1260 years was never demonstrably fulfilled before the fall of the temporal power of the Papacy in 1870; and the true nature of the Divine system of times and seasons was never before demonstrated as now. The present generation ought therefore to exhibit fruits of holy living, and earnest service, never seen before, and if this truth were mixed with faith in the heart, *it would.* Hence our deep regret that futurist expositions should take off the edge of this mightily practical truth; and that, as at the Reformation they blinded the eyes of Papists to the true character of the Papacy,—so they should now blind Protestants to the real nature of the days in which we live; depriving them of the certainty afforded by the sure word of prophecy in this time of the end, and throwing them back on the uncertainty of earlier ages.

A moment's reflection will show that in the past, while the beginnings of the ages and dispensations had general promises and predictions only, *chronological prophecy was always permitted to throw its solemnly helpful guiding light on the close.* The first prediction of this character ever given was that of the 120 years to elapse prior to the Flood, that great *close* of the antediluvian age. The second—the 400 years to the Exodus, marked the *close* of the entire Patriarchal dispensation; the third—the 65 years to elapse before Ephraim's overthrow, led up to the *close* of the kingdom of the Ten Tribes; and the fourth—the 70 years' captivity of Judah, marked out by its commencement the *close* of Jewish monarchy, and by its termination, the *close* of the Babylonian Empire; the fifth—the 490 years to Messiah the Prince,—led up to the *close* of the Jewish

dispensation ; and the remaining three great chronologic prophecies of the Bible,—the 2520, the 2300, and the seven-times repeated 1260 years,—all indicate the *close* of the Times of the Gentiles, the “end of the age.” The reason seems to be, that each fresh age has been introduced by *miracle* on so grand a scale that faith needed for a time no further aid than that afforded by history and promise. But as the era of miracle receded, the temptation to doubt and unbelief grew stronger, and God graciously provided the help of chronologic prophecy to sustain to the end the faith and hope of His people. They who in this day despise that aid, or make it void by fanciful, unhistoric, Futurist interpretations, cast aside an invaluable weapon for the special conflict of these closing days. An age which rejects the argument from miracle is confronted by that from the fulfilment of prophecy. As the evidence of the *first* becomes more questionable on account of its remote antiquity, that of the *second* becomes more irresistible year by year. Fulfilled prophecy is miracle in the highest sphere,—that of mind. It is the ever-growing proof of Divine prescience in the authors of sacred Scripture.

To one who notes the peculiar characteristics of the condition of Christendom in our day, it seems evident that the testimony which specially needs to be borne at this solemn juncture is a testimony not only to the goodness but the severity of God. “Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God,” says the Apostle Paul to the Gentile Church, speaking of God’s dealings with Israel, “on them which fell, severity, but towards thee goodness, if thou continue in His goodness, otherwise *thou also shalt be cut off.*”

It needs faith in Divine revelation to believe this, and perhaps few of the clear teachings of Scripture are more

generally disbelieved in our day; but unbelief will not make the promise or the threatening of God of none effect, and though myriads may ignore the solemn fact, and though myriads more may, as predicted, laugh to scorn the Divine denunciations of impending doom, *it is at hand*. If the Bible be true, there can be nothing more certain than this, that Divine judgment must close this dispensation, and do so, in all probability, within a brief period of time. Introductory and premonitory Vials of wrath have already been poured out on the Papal Kingdoms of Western Europe, and on the Ottoman Empire of Eastern Europe; the sixth Vial has been pouring out for many years, and seems to have all but accomplished its appointed task of "drying up the Euphrates," or wasting away the power of Turkey; *the seventh Vial brings the fall of Babylon, the Marriage of the Lamb, and the final destruction of Antichrist and all his hosts*. It is the Vial of the consummation, and when it is poured forth the great voice out of heaven proclaims "*It is done*."

The prospect of the judgments which are to bring this dispensation to a close, and which are described in terms of appalling strength by inspired apostles (2 Thess. ii.; 2 Peter iii.; Rev. xviii., xix.) cannot *in itself* be an attractive one to the Christian heart. It must excite in His people, when they realize it, the compassions of Christ; and incline them, as they see the ungodly turning from the only way of escape, to weep, as their Master wept over Jerusalem in the prospect of *its* coming doom, and to exclaim with Him, "If thou hadst known, at least in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes!"

Yet it needs but a glance over the wide extent and

awful character of the evils which those judgments are to *remove*, and the unspeakable blessings which they are to *introduce*, to make a true Christian even from motives of humanity desire the hastening of the day of God. If use had not familiarized us with the miseries born of sin, if our standard of human duty and human privilege had not been debased by ages of acquaintance with things as they are,—the present state of the world would fill us with grief and amazement, and with impatient longings for a change.

Israel's conversion, and the world's jubilee of liberty and gladness, date alike from the Coming of the Lord with all His saints to execute judgment on the ungodly. Of the blessed condition of things which shall succeed, during the world's Millennial sabbath, Scripture gives many a glorious sketch; and though we may be unable to imagine it to ourselves in its detail, we know its broad essential features, and they imply almost all we can desire. Satan, the source of all sin, the great deceiver and seducer of men, is to be rendered perfectly powerless: Christ, the source of all blessing, spiritual and temporal, is to reign, to govern the nations of the earth.

And while compassion for our fellow-creatures would make us long for the dawn of the day of Christ, how much more, *desire for His glory*! Can we, who own Him Lord, be content to have Him despised and rejected still by His ancient people Israel; denied, mocked, and insulted by the vast infidel host; displaced from His rightful throne?

And without being selfish we rejoice and must rejoice for our own sakes in the prospect of the near approach of the end of the age, notwithstanding its accompanying judgments.

For whatever the exact portion it may bring to others,

whatever its immediate and precise effect on Israel, on Christendom, and on the heathen nations of the earth,—there can be no question as to the portion it brings to the true Church, and to each individual Christian. “In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,” the dead in Christ shall rise, and the living “in Christ” be changed, the corruptible put on incorruption, and the mortal immortality. When the Lord Himself descends from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, we shall be caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we be for ever with the Lord. Simple, clear, abundant, and unmistakable are the predictions with reference to our portion at the Coming of the Lord. “It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to those that trouble you; and to you who are troubled *rest with us* when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; when He shall come to be *glorified in His saints, and admired in all them that believe*, in that day” (2 Thess. i. 6–10).

Rest! that is to be one feature of our portion; rest with Christ, rest with the saints and martyrs that are gone before. Rest from conflict with the world, the flesh, and the devil; rest from the life and walk of *faith*, in the more glorious life and walk of *sight*,—for we shall behold His face, and *see* Him whom not having seen we love; rest of heart in love’s full fruition, in complete and eternal union with our Lord,—the Marriage of the Lamb; rest of mind, in perfect knowledge, for then shall we know even as also we are known; rest from

the burden of this body of humiliation, rest from all care and fear, from all strife, and all pain and sorrow; and from the heart-ache produced by the daily sights and sounds of ungodliness.

Ours shall be the joy, not only of being like Him ourselves, but of beholding all those we love like Him also; the joy of unhindered communion and worship, the joy of perpetual and perfect service. And all these joys sweetened by the assurance that they are ours for ever, and that we shall go no more out from the Temple of the immediate presence of God. Earth's Millennium is to end, like all previous dispensations, in apostasy and judgment; but to the risen saints no change, no apostasy, can ever come. Christ is their life; because He lives, they live also, in Him and with Him, eternally one. Their eternal state begins at His Epiphany, at the second Advent for which we wait.

Men and brethren, are these things so? Have we a hope thus full of glory, and does our hope draw nigh? What manner of persons then ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness? Ought we not to be persons filled with faith, even as the world is filled with scepticism? Ought we not to be moved with fear for the ungodly around us, and burning with earnest zeal for their salvation? If the day of Christ be so near, how should we employ the brief remaining interval? To proclaim far and wide throughout the earth the everlasting Gospel before it is too late; to lay hold of men and women and pull them out of Sodom ere the fire of heaven fall; to cry aloud as regards Babylon, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues"; to spend and be spent in seeking to rescue the perishing,—this is the work that becomes us. To warn the world that the

sword of destruction is coming; to explain to men that the long-suffering of God is for salvation, and that it is nearly over; and to live as though we believed these things,—this is our plain duty.

When the destruction of Jerusalem and the ruin of Palestine were approaching, when fearful judgments were on the eve of being poured forth on the Jewish nation,—our Lord forewarned His disciples against laying up treasures for themselves upon earth. He counselled them to lodge whatever treasures they had beyond the spoiler's reach. What the position of those early Christians in Palestine was, such is our position now. Let us be warned in time. Let us make haste to lay out all our buried talents in Christ's service. Let us be up and doing. It is the evening of this dispensation. The harvest is red with the glow of the setting sun. Who will bring in these waiting sheaves? China's millions are there; India's countless idolators, and Africa's innumerable degraded sons are there. The children of error and superstition are there. Not a few whom we personally know and love are there. Let us reap while the light lasts.

Brethren, let us lift up our heads, for our redemption draweth nigh. We see on every hand the predicted signs of the nearness of the Advent. Let us not wait till it comes, to rejoice in it. Let us rejoice now, because the joy of Christ and of His Church is near.

And you who neither desire nor dread that day—you who love not our Lord Jesus Christ—you whose busy thoughts and whose warm affections are still in the world, whose motives and objects and treasures are of the earth,—let the light of the Gospel you have heard but never understood, now shine at length.

“God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Him-

self, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though *God* did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, *be ye reconciled to God*. For He hath made *Him* to be *sin* for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made *the righteousness of God in Him*."

O Thou who hast taken on Thyself humanity, that Thou mightest bear our griefs, and carry our sorrows, and atone for all our sins,—Thou whose loud expiring cry upon the Cross rung through the universe the triumphant truth that our redemption is accomplished, that its battle has been fought, its victory won;—Thou whose tender sympathies and whose immortal love surpassing knowledge are with us still, whose sacred Presence, unseen, but ever felt, guards and guides Thy redeemed in all their pilgrim way,—Thou who art *coming* in the brightness of Thy majesty, in the sweetness of Thy grace, in the fullness of Thy strength, to finish our redemption, and complete Thy triumph over all our fears, and all our foes,—Thou whose unchangeable purpose it is to surround Thyself with the spotless beauty of a new creation, whose voice shall yet proclaim the renovation of a ruined world, the completion of the conquest of our evil by Thy good, the perfecting of Thy redeemed in the holy image of their Redeemer; whose faithful hand shall yet finish the true Temple of Jehovah, the living temple of His fullness, the habitation of His glory for ever and for ever,—Thou whose latest promise is "*surely I come quickly*," and whose Coming is now near at hand,—we long, we watch, we wait to welcome Thee,—come as Thou hast said—come soon—" *Even so, come, Lord Jesus!*"

APPENDIX A

EVENTS AND DATES OF THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES

PART I. FROM THE RISE OF THE BABYLONIAN, TO THE FALL OF THE WESTERN ROMAN EMPIRE : "A TIME, TIMES, AND A HALF"

B.C. 747. **T**HE Era of Nabonassar's Accession, Feb. 26 :
verified by astronomy : used by ancient astronomers as the starting-point of Babylonian chronology.

From this date to the fall of the last Western Roman Emperor, Romulus Augustulus, Aug. 22, 476 A.D., is 1260 lunar years, to a day : that is, in prophetic symbolism, "1260 days," or "forty-two months," or "a time, and times, and half a time."

THE BABYLONIAN EMPIRE

Duration, B.C. 747 to B.C. 538 : 210 solar years.

- „ 741. The prophecy of Israel's desolation given :—
"Within threescore and five years" (Isa. vii. 8).
- „ 723. Samaria besieged (2 Kings xviii. 9) : and taken, B.C. 721 :
Captivity of the Ten Tribes.
- „ 713. Judea invaded by Sennacherib (2 Kings xviii. and xix. ; Isa. xxxvi. 39).
- „ 606. Full development of the Babylonian Empire :
Nebuchadnezzar sole ruler, B.C. 604.
- „ 605. The Seventy Years' Captivity of Judah begins (Jer. xxv. 1) : The Vision of the Great Image given (Dan. ii.).
- „ 598. Full Commencement of the Times of the Gentiles (2 Kings xxiv. 14).
- „ 555. The Vision of the Four Beasts given (Dan. vii.).

B.C. 553. The Vision of the Ram and He-goat given (Dan. viii.).

„ 538. Belshazzar's Feast (Dan. v.): fall of Babylon.

THE MEDO-PERSIAN EMPIRE

Duration, B.C. 538 to B.C. 334: 210 lunar years.

„ 538. The prophecy of the Seventy Weeks given (Dan. ix.).

„ 536. Cyrus becomes sole ruler: his edict for rebuilding the Temple: (2 Chron. xxxvi. 23; Ezra. i. 1).

End of the 70 years' captivity of Judah.

„ 521. Decree of Darius, confirming that of Cyrus (Ezra vi. 8).

Haggai and Zechariah prophesy.

„ 404. Accession of Artaxerxes Longimanus.

„ 457. Command to restore Jerusalem: Ezra's journey (Ezra vii. 6). [*See Appendix C.*]

Beginning of the Seventy Weeks, in solar years.

„ 444. Commission given to Nehemiah: his journey (Neh. ii.).

[Beginning of the Seventy Weeks, in lunar years.]

END OF O.T. CANON: CLOSE OF O.T. HISTORY

„ 334 Conquest of Persia by Alexander the Great.

THE GRECIAN EMPIRE

Duration as an Empire, B.C. 336 to B.C. 323 (Dan. vii. 6).

Duration of its divided condition under the Ptolemies and Seleucidae, B.C. 323 to B.C. 63 (Dan. viii. 8, 22, xi. 4).

„ 175. Accession of Antiochus Epiphanes (Dan. xi. 21; 2 Maccabees).

Jerusalem destroyed: sacrifices stopped.

„ 168. Judas Maccabeus saves the Jews.

364 THE APPROACHING END OF THE AGE

- B.C. 165. The Temple re-dedicated: the Feast of the Dedication marks the date (John x. 22).
 „ 65. Pompey conquers Syria for Rome: and takes Jerusalem, B.C. 62.
 „ 37. Accession of Herod the Great in Judea.
 Antigonus, the last Jewish king, slain (Gen. xlix. 10).

THE ROMAN EMPIRE

- „ 27. Augustus Cæsar, Emperor.
 „ 6. The Nativity (Luke ii.).
 „ 4. Death of Herod, just before the Passover (Matt. ii. 19).
 A.D. 14. Tiberius, Emperor (Luke xx. 20-25).
 „ 25. Baptism and Ministry of Christ, from Autumn, A.D. 25 (Luke iii. 23).
 „ 29. Death of Messiah, 3 p.m., March 18, Friday (John xix. 28).
 Resurrection, March 20: Ascension, April 28-29.
 „ 34. End of the Seventy Weeks.
 „ 37. Caligula, Emperor.
 „ 41. Claudius, Emperor (Acts xi. 28; xxviii. 2).
 Herod Agrippa, King of all Palestine.
 „ 44. All Palestine a Roman Province.
 „ 53. Claudius Felix, sole Procurator of Judea.
 „ 54. Nero, Emperor: first persecution, for four years.
 „ 66. Jewish War begins. Christians flee to Pella, and are safe (Matt. xxiv. 16).
 „ 68. Galba, Emperor.
 „ 69. Otho, Emperor: conquered by Vespasian: whose son, Titus, conducts the Jewish War.
 „ 70. Siege of Jerusalem by Titus: the Temple burnt; 1,100,000 Jews perish in the siege; 97,000 carried off as captives.
 „ 71. Triumph of Vespasian and Titus at Rome: Commemorated by the Arch of Titus.
 „ 79. Titus, Emperor.

- A.D. 81. Domitian, Emperor: second persecution.
 „ 95. [John receives the Apocalypse].
 „ 96. Nerva, Emperor: Domitian slain.
 „ 132. Jewish rebellion under Barcochebas, a false
 Messiah:
 580,000 Jews slain: Jews forbidden to
 approach Jerusalem.
 „ 135. Jewish desolation complete.
 „ 303. Great final persecution, under Diocletian: the
 tenth, lasting ten years (Rev. ii. 10).
 „ 306. Constantine, Emperor: converted in 312.
 „ 323. Constantine sole Emperor: Christianity estab-
 lished.

END OF PAGAN ROMAN EMPIRE

- „ 361. Julian, Emperor: tries to restore Paganism.
 „ 364. Final division of Eastern and Western Empires.
 „ 410. Sack of Rome by Alaric and the Goths.
 „ 455. Sack of Rome by Genseric and the Vandals.
 „ 476. Romulus Augustulus deposed, last Western
 Emperor.

END OF WESTERN ROMAN EMPIRE

PART II. THE RISE, CULMINATION, AND DECAY, OF
 THE PAPAL AND MOHAMMEDAN POWERS:
 “A TIME, TIMES, AND A HALF”

- A.D. 533. Justinian, Emperor, constitutes the Bishop of
 Rome “head of all the Holy Churches, and
 all the holy priests of God.”
 „ 607. Phocas, Emperor, grants to Boniface III. the
 headship over all the Churches of Christ.
 Commemorated by the Pillar of Phocas,
 in Rome.
 „ 622. MOHAMMEDAN ERA OF THE HEGIRA: the start-
 ing-point of the Mohammedan Calendar.
 The Fifth Trumpet begins (Rev. ix.).
 „ 637. Jerusalem captured by the Saracens:
 The Mosque of Omar on the site of the Temple.

366 THE APPROACHING END OF THE AGE

A.D. 663. Pope Vitalian decrees the use of Latin exclusively in worship.

(Lateinos = 666, suggested by Irenæus).

„ 731. The Saracens defeated in France at Tours: their course of conquest arrested from this time.

„ 756. Pepin gives the Pope Temporal Power as sovereign.

„ 1073. Gregory VII. (Hildebrand) Pope: unlimited claims for Papacy.

„ 1128. “War with the Saints,” begun by Papal Rome (Rev. xiii. 7).

„ 1268. Papal dominion at its utmost height.

„ 1299. The Ottoman Turks advance Westward from Euphrates.

The Sixth Trumpet (Rev. ix. 13–21) begins.

„ 1453. The Turks take Constantinople and put an end to the Eastern Empire (Rev. ix. 15).

„ 1517. Luther publishes his “95 Theses.”

THE REFORMATION BEGINS (Rev. x.)

„ 1555. The Religious Peace of Augsburg establishes the Reformation.

„ 1572. The Massacre of St. Bartholomew.

„ 1755. Rise of Infidelity: Voltaire, Rousseau, and the Cyclopædists (Rev. xvi. 2).

ERA OF THE SEVEN VIALS BEGINS (Rev. xi. 14, xv. etc.)

A.D. 1789. French Revolution begins.

„ 1798. The Pope dethroned by Bonaparte.

„ 1804. Napoleon, Emperor of the French.

The Fourth Vial (Rev. xvi. 8).

„ 1844. The Ottoman Government compelled to grant religious toleration.

1260 lunar years from the HEGIRA.

„ 1848. Revolutions in Europe: the Pope an exile.

„ 1866. Papal Austria overthrown by Prussia.

„ 1869. Opening of the Vatican Council.

A.D. 1870. Infallibility of the Pope decreed by the Council, July 18.

Papal Temporal Power ended, October 9.

1260 years from the death of PHOCAS.

„ 1906. The Papal Church disestablished in France.

„ 1911. The Papal Church disestablished in Portugal.

„ 1912. Turkey defeated by the Balkan States.

„ 1914. Beginning of the Great War.

„ 1917. The liberation of Jerusalem, Dec. 9.

APPENDIX B

AUTHOR'S REMARKS ON THE PERIOD REACHED IN THE TIMES OF THE GEN- TILES, AND FUTURE PROSPECTS.¹

THE character, magnitude, and multiplicity of the events constituting the rise, course, decline, and fall of the four great Pagan empires of antiquity, render the fact that their joint duration was limited to the exact bisection of “seven times,” or the period of “time, times, and a half time,” one of the profoundest interest and importance.

The chronological fact thus discovered is marvellous in itself and in that which it implies.

The hand of God in history, and the inspiration of prophecy, are clearly attested by this marvellous relation between celestial revolutions and chronological periods, which presents also irresistible confirmation of the year-day interpretation of the 1260 “days” of prophecy, the assigned duration of the second and more important portion of the “Times of the Gentiles.”

As to the period now reached, the year A.D. 1879. We know that the latter half of the Times of the Gentiles is in Daniel xii. lengthened by two additions of

¹ What follows in this Appendix is as the author wrote it in A.D. 1879, with only the omission of a few words about the events of that year.—ED.

30 and 45 years, making the 1260 into 1335 years. We assume that the former half may have been similarly lengthened, and as a matter of history we see that while 1260 *lunar* years comprised exactly the duration of the four great Pagan empires, 1335 *solar* led to the accession of Gregory the Great, the commencement of Latin Christianity. This point seems to be the bisection of the entire "Times of the Gentiles," as measured from its extreme termini, and comprising two periods of 1335 years. From this point 1260 years terminated in the revolution era 1848-49 (which was also 2520 lunar years from Nebuchadnezzar's overthrow of Judah), but 1335 years do not terminate until the yet future year, 1923. That is, not only the main period but the added 30 years have already elapsed, and we are now entering on the final 45. We have long passed the termination of the 2520 years as reckoned from Nabonassar, and we are within 45 years of their termination as reckoned from Nebuchadnezzar, their latest commencing point. If the added 75 years are included (as seems probable, and from the nature of the case almost certain) in this latest form of the period, then we have already entered on the brief final fraction of the prophetic times; they may, of course, be supplementary to it, when the end of the age would be by so much the more distant. Time only can declare.

"THEREFORE BE YE ALSO READY, FOR IN SUCH AN HOUR AS YE THINK NOT THE SON OF MAN COMETH."

APPENDIX C

THE STARTING-POINTS OF THE SEVENTY WEEKS

THE author had not noticed, in 1879, that the "70 weeks" period was accurately fulfilled, *in lunar years*, from the date of the commission given to Nehemiah in

B.C. 444. But in *Light for the Last Days*, which was published in 1887, he makes this the *main* fulfilment, as being more accurate than that in *solar* years from *Ezra's journey* (see the new edition, pp. 66, 67).

The prophecy, however, makes a *decree*, and not a *journey*, the starting-point. Nehemiah's commission was followed almost at once by his setting out: for he went practically alone. Ezra, on the other hand, had to organize a company of 6000 people, with all their goods; and his preparations could not have taken less than six months. He *arrived* at Jerusalem in Artaxerxes' seventh year; but it is evident from the form of his statement (Ezra vii. 8, compared with v. 7) that he did not *start* in the King's seventh year, but in his *sixth*. Taking this in connection with the fact, which is clear from Ezra and Nehemiah, that the King's year *began in the summer*,—Chisleu in it preceded Nisan, as Nehemiah i. 1, ii. 1 show,—the date of the decree is put back to *the Autumn of B.C. 459*, which is $486\frac{1}{2}$ years solar from *the Spring of A.D. 29*, the date of the Crucifixion.

Thus the predicted period, from the beginning of the "70 weeks" to the middle of the 70th week,—*was accurately fulfilled twice over: in solar years from the decree given to Ezra, in lunar years from the permission given to Nehemiah to go to his assistance.*

The late Dr. Aldersmith claimed to have been the first to bring the *lunar* fulfilment to the author's notice, in the year 1883: and this seems probable. But his further claim, to have been the first to *recognize* that fulfilment, cannot be maintained. It was suggested, quite definitely, by Julius Africanus, as long ago as A.D. 221. (See the *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. ix. part ii. p. 184).—ED.

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